







THE RACE WITH THE LANCERS.—Page 180.

CHILE CON CARNE;

OR,

THE CAMP AND THE FIELD.

BY

S. COMPTON SMITH, M. D.,

ACTING SURGEON WITH GENERAL TAYLOR'S DIVISION IN MEXICO.

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TO
CHARLES JENKS SMITH, ESQ.,

OF BROOKLYN,

MY RELATIVE AND VERY KIND FRIEND, I BEG TO

Dedicate this Book,

AS A SLIGHT, AND HUMBLE TOKEN OF THE HIGH ESTEEM

AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting this book to the reading public, I wish to give my reasons for presuming so far upon its indulgences. In the first place, then, some few of these sketches having, from time to time, made their début, in the periodicals of the day, in a less finished form, I felt I had a right, in justice to myself, to give them publicity in the form in which I now present them.

Another, and more important reason, is the fact, that notwithstanding many hastily-written works on the *Mexican War*,—works prepared expressly to fill a temporary demand,—have been issued from the press,—nothing as yet had appeared in the shape of personal experiences, and anecdotal incidents of that campaign.

The field for a work of that character is a wide one ; and I have endeavored, in the following pages,

to cultivate it to a very limited extent. It is true, that I have but very superficially turned up the soil, which might be made so prolific. But it is to be hoped, that the work, being so indifferently performed on my part, may induce some more skillful laborer to resume it; and, doing it greater justice, produce a richer harvest of interesting incidents and experiences, to be garnered into the storehouse of history.

This work covers but a portion of the ground of operations of the American army,—being necessarily confined to the line passed over by the victorious forces under the immediate command of the gallant Taylor,—to which only the writer was attached.

The incidents and anecdotes, connected with the rapid succession of victories on the line of General Scott, will, doubtless, some day, be collected in a form, in which they may be passed down to posterity, as worthy of preservation.

In justice to others as well as to himself, it is but proper to say,—that in carrying out the plan of the work,—the author has, in the first place, taken the liberty to make a long extract from Kendall's '*Santa Fé Expedition*,'—the nature of the subject making it unavoidable; and, secondly,—he has

also,—in that portion of the work, devoted to the battle of Buena Vista,—made frequent reference to that most excellent work of Captain Carleton's—entitled “*History of the Battle of Buena Vista.*” This is altogether the best, most correct, and detailed account of that affair, which has ever emanated from the press.

The following incidents are all matters of *fact*, and will be readily recognized as such, by those of my readers, who were so fortunate as to have taken part in the exciting scenes of the campaign;—and although, in some instances, they are related in a colloquial style, to render them more attractive to the general reader, they are, nevertheless, truthful.

Perhaps I have not confined the order of my sketches to strict accordance with dates;—as not having the means at hand, I have been obliged in a great measure to draw upon memory;—and it is almost impossible, in such cases, to keep a correct sequence of events.

And now, in bringing these prefatory remarks to a close,—I have only a parting word to say to that interesting class of penny-a-liners, who consider it — their especial province and right, to dissect everything, which has the fresh impress of ink and type;

—and to lay bare all its imperfections, and improprieties: Lay on, gentlemen!—dissect a doctor at your pleasure,—but remember, that every attempt to annihilate my little book, is but a gratuitous advertisement, that will enhance its sale;—therefore—
“*care quid dicis, quando, et cui!*”

S. C. S.

NEW-YORK, *July*, 1857.

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CHILE CON CARNE.

CHAPTER I.

Commencement of the War.—Call for Volunteers.—Mexico a Land of Romance.—Cause of Volunteering.—The “Halls of the Montezumas.”—The Author’s Intention to Visit Mexico.—Embarkation.—The Sabine River.—The Voyage and its Attendants—Lake Sabine.—The Sabine Pass.—Gulf Buccancers.—Lafitte.—Norther.—An Arrival.—Lost Boy.—The Search.—Mr. Deshields.—The Stock-raiser, McGuffey.—Alligator Holes.—Probable Fate of the Boy.—Search Discontinued.—Distress of Parents.—Meeting with the Father in Galveston.

THE annexation of Texas had been consummated, notwithstanding the protest of the Mexican nation. General Taylor, with his miniature army, had left his encampment at Corpus Christi, and moved upon the left bank of the Rio Grande, claiming this stream as the western limit of the new State.

Then—

“Wild war’s deadly blast was blown.”

The American people were aroused by the unfamiliar sound, and war!—war! was on every tongue,

and in every ear. The fields of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma had received in blood the baptism of immortality; and their names were already woven into the woof of history. The first act of the great drama, on which all the nations of the civilized world were gazing, had been opened; and never were actors on the mimic stage hailed with such spontaneous applause,—such deep heart-felt cheerings, as greeted our little band of heroes on those distant plains.

The contest had commenced in earnest; but the gallant forces of Taylor, so few in numbers, could not long contend against the combined armies of Mexico, which were gathering from every valley and mountain-side of that extensive land.

Thousands of the impulsive and generous-hearted youths of the South hastened to the scene. Northward passed the excitement; and with lightning speed it coursed along the iron nerves, then just being stretched over the land, till the far-spreading contagion kindled in every breast.

Ho! volunteers for the war!—and every hamlet, and village, and town, sent forth its tens, and hundreds, and thousands to swell the human tide flowing toward the shores of Mexico. Mexico! land of romance and boyhood's waking dreams! What American youth is there whose veins have not

swelled with a warmer current, as he pored over her early history, wrapped as it is in the exaggeration of her Spanish conquerors, and the mystery which the Jesuit priests throw about every object on which their shadows fall. Her mountains and valleys had been consecrated in his young imagination, as the once happy homes of a simple people, existing under the mild and peaceful rule of the Montezumas, before the gold-maddened Spaniards had ravished their beautiful land, converted their blooming valleys into fields of carnage, and driven the inoffensive Indians from their city and temples, to make room for their piles of blood-gotten plunder of gold and silver.

But Mexico—almost a *terra incognita*, so little did we really know of the country—was now to be opened to us. What cared the youthful blood whether the war were a righteous one or not. That was our country's affair—not ours. And, with light hearts and bounding pulses, we left our homes to test the novelties of a first campaign, and embark in quest of wild adventures in that far-famed land.

It was not an impulse of patriotism, strictly speaking, which prompted the simultaneous spirit of volunteering throughout the country—that, however, had much influence in the cause,—but, a spirit of enterprise and curiosity, peculiar to the

American people, had a good deal more to do in the premises.

War, practical war, was a thing unknown to the youths of the land: they had only the knowledge of it obtained from books. They knew it only in theory; for, since the last struggle with England, our arms had been called into requisition only in the border feuds with our Indian neighbors. But, from reading and listening to the tales of the struggles of our fathers in the contest, which resulted in our independence, they had imbibed a military spirit, and longed to experience, in their own persons, the exciting scenes and circumstances of the battle-field.

Now was opened an opportunity which had been so long and ardently hoped for; and with so many alluring anticipations as Mexico, with her exciting history presented to the adventurous and inquisitive American.

“The Halls of the Montezumas”

became, from the first, a rallying word, as it afterward became the realization of our hopes; and to “revel in the Halls of the Montezumas” was an idea and expression, in the ranks of our volunteer army, as familiar as the household words of our distant homes.

For many years I had promised myself a visit to Mexico : in fact, this had been one of the cherished plans of my life, from the earliest days of boyhood. Year after year had rolled away, and still the favorite project had been delayed.

At length, in the winter of 1846, being then in Louisiana, on the banks of the Sabine, I concluded to proceed down that river to the coast, to carry into effect the long-cherished object.

At this season of the year, the low stage of water in the river made navigation impracticable to anything larger than canoes. Accordingly, in company with a friend, I obtained a "*dug-out*"—a craft roughly hewed out of a pine-tree, and much in use on the western and southern rivers and lagoons—and embarking, with a few blankets, our trunks, fishing-lines, guns, etc., with a good supply of "ship-stores," we started on our voyage towards the Gulf of Mexico.

The Sabine flows through an extremely wild and gloomy region, where game of all kinds, to be found in a southern wilderness, is very abundant. Wild fowl sported fearlessly upon the bosom of the stream, and covered its surface. The rifle of the backwoodsman had, as yet, but seldom disturbed the quiet of their winter retreat; and it required but a single shot from our "double-barrels" to furnish us with

abundant means for a savory mess at our even camp-fire. The water, over which our primitive vessel lazily glided, was as amply provisioned in its depths, as upon its well-stocked surface. When our palates were weary of *fowl*, we had only to throw over a baited hook, and, at the first sand-bar, regale upon "fish, fried, or fricaseed."

To enumerate the number of bears, deer, and otters—to say nothing of the alligators—we killed, on our voyage downward, might endanger my reputation; and, as I intend, in these pages, to state nothing but facts, I will not venture too much, even upon *truths*, which might, in any degree, compromise my character for strict veracity.

After a passage of two weeks—full of interesting incidents, and having passed something over three hundred miles, from our point of embarkation—we arrived at the *Pass of the Sabine*.

The river proper does not directly debouch into the gulf, but terminates in the Sabine Lake. This body of water covers an area of some thirty or forty miles, and empties into the gulf through the "*Pass*,"—a strait between five and six miles in length.

In the days of the Gulf Buccaneers, this lake and pass was a place of frequent resort for those lawless rovers. Here they found shelter from the "*Northers*," so prevalent upon the coast, and easily evaded the

vigilance of the cruisers who might be on the lookout for them. None but themselves were acquainted with the intricate windings of the dangerous channel, and, when once within the oyster-reefs, they were unapproachable.

At the head of the lake, I was shown the spot where the famous gulf-pirate, Lafitte, repaired his fleet; and where he had a *dépôt* for storing his ill-gotten gains till such times as they were forwarded to his New Orleans consignees. The best pilots found on the gulf coast were those who had served under the buccaneer flag of Lafitte. Some of these men I chanced to meet at Galveston, and found them ever ready and happy to repeat their oft-told tales of what they were pleased to term "the good old days of free-trade."

At the Pass, where, as yet, were found but three or four families—but which will, at some time, become a commercial town—we learned the probable prospects of troubles with Mexico, in relation to the matter of annexation. Here, my friend, the companion of my voyage, having accomplished the object of the trip, which was the trip itself, left me to reascend the river for a short distance, where he had been offered a horse in exchange for our old dug-out. Before I left the Pass, where I remained for several weeks, I heard of his safe arrival at his

home. I remained to luxuriate on the excellent oysters which here abound, and to enjoy the rare sport with my gun, among the wild fowl and deer, which literally covered the prairies.

“*City of the Pass!*” although in embryo yet,
Across thy waves a thousand lights shall flit;
A thousand merchants through thy streets shall ply,
With faces seaward turned, and anxious eye.
Tho’ wide-extended plains now ’round thee spread,
That echo only to the wild bull’s tread—
Tho’ reeds and sedge-grass in thy pathways grow,
Where rarely now the hunter-herdsmen go—
The day will come, nor is it distant long,
When on thy crowded strand a busy throng
Will toil and sweat with greedy pains,
For the yellow dross that traffic gains;
And commerce with her snowy wings shall come
To hail thy stormless waters as her home.”

It was during my stay here, that, forced by a norther, a little clipper-rigged vessel sought shelter in the strait. She was owned and commanded by a German gentleman, who, with his little family, consisting of his wife and an only son, and accompanied by his servants, had just arrived from Europe. He was now coasting along the Gulf shore, with the intention of selecting a spot on the Texas coast for their future home.

His son, a promising lad of some fourteen, or sixteen years, accompanied me one day to shoot brants, and being a good shot soon filled his bag.

After remaining several days, the little vessel dropped down towards the mouth of the Pass. But the wind not blowing from a favorable quarter, she was made fast to the shore ; and father and son, taking their guns, went out upon the marsh in quest of game. About noon they returned. Still, the wind remaining unfavorable, the son, saying he would try to get a few more birds, started out alone, promising to return within an hour or two. The mother, seated under an awning on the deck, watched the boy for some time, and heard him discharge his gun. But being called below to dinner, saw no more of him.

Several hours passed away, and the sun was sinking towards the horizon, but the boy did not return. The wind had now worked round to the right quarter, and the father hoisted the signal, agreed upon, to recall his son. But he did not come. Down sank the sun, and the shades of evening began to fall. Still the absent boy came not in sight. Now it was, that fearful forebodings wrung the hearts of those doting parents. Their child—their only darling child—what could have detained him !

The father and crew shouted his name at the top of their voices. But no returning shout replied. Recall guns were fired—but no answering

shot relieved their bursting hearts. Through that long and fearful night, they sought, with lights, in every direction for the missing boy. All that live-long night the wretched mother walked the deck alone, wringing her hands in anxious agony, and watching, with tearful eyes, the distant lights, as they flitted from place to place, over the marsh.

In vain she listened, with aching ear, for the signal shot which was to tell of the recovery of her lost child;—and, O! God! what agony wrung that wretched mother's breast, when, near day, the party returned, and proclaimed their search in vain.

With the return of the morning light, the father came up to the "city," and brought the sad intelligence of the loss of his boy.

Mr. Deshields, the revenue officer, immediately ordered out his boat's crew; and every man about the Pass, with but *one* exception, volunteered to assist in the search. But, I blush for human nature while I record it, one strong, able-bodied—man—I had almost said, but I will take back the word,—one fellow, named *Maguffey*, a stock-raiser, refused to go, though earnestly solicited to do so; urging, when reasons for his refusal were demanded, that "*he didn't like to wet his feet in the marsh!*"

Leaving this craven and selfish wretch to enjoy

his dry stockings, we all hurried to the marsh. All that day, and the following, we searched it in every direction for miles. But not till near night of the next day was anything discovered to indicate what might have been the fate of the poor boy. A shot from one of Mr. Deshield's men, called the scattered hunters about him. There, by a large *alligator's hole*, lay the boy's gun, and, near by, one of his shoes. No other sign or remnant of clothing was to be found. The marsh in this place abounded with these alligators' holes. They are deep pools of water, formed by these creatures, among the reeds, which grow in patches over the marsh. Upon the mud, thrown around the margins of these holes, the alligators lay, basking lazily in the sun; and, when disturbed by the approach of danger, hide themselves in the bottom of their muddy wells.

The fate of the poor lad was now explained. He had fallen a victim to the rapacity of one of those disgusting saurians.

"Oh! my boy!—my poor boy!" exclaimed the miserable father. "I cannot give up the search for him yet. Is there no chance for his escape? Does he not live yet? Oh! friends, don't give up the search."

We assured him, that to look further would result in no good; for if the fate we expected had not

been his, he must have perished from the effects of fright, fatigue, and exposure.

“That boy,” said the father, “has never, since his birth, been so long absent from my sight. I have had him with me in all my voyages. He has journeyed with me over Europe, and ever, on all occasions, has he been my constant companion—and now—must I lose him thus—in so horrid a place—and by so cruel a death? Oh! cannot you, my friends, restore to me, at least, the mangled remains of my poor dear boy?”

It was in vain we endeavored to condole with him, or offer our sympathies—grief like his could listen to no condolence of strangers.

He would not leave the place without making one more effort to recover his lost child; and though we were satisfied that the body would never be found, we indulged the heart-broken parents by continuing the hunt through the night. At length, even they were convinced that further search would be in vain.

Never shall I forget the look of agony and despair in that father's face, as he pressed our hands, and in vain essayed to thank us for the sympathy we had shown for him—then turned away, and falteringly gave orders to his crew to resume the voyage.

A few days after, I arrived at Galveston ; and almost the first person I met on landing was the unhappy father of the lost boy. He recognized me, and throwing his arms about my neck, endeavored to speak ; but his heart was too full for utterance. I knew what his thoughts were, and what inquiry he wished to make ; and shaking my head, for I, too, had lost the control of my own voice, gave him to understand that the lost had never been found.

CHAPTER II.

Call made on Texas.—Colonel Bennett.—Writer joins a Texas Rifle Company.—Schooner "Rosella."—Conduct of Government Officer.—Short Supplies.—Storm on the Gulf.—Breakers.—Heading for the Beach.—Exciting Scene while in the Breakers.—Shipwreck.—Isle del Padre.—Chowder.—Colonel Bennett leaves the Wreck.—Pilot-boat offers Aid.—Wagons arrive.—A Walk ahead.—Young Roberts.—Wreckers along the Shore.—Drift of the Gulf Stream.—Sea-shells.—Norther.—Attempt to rest.—Shifting Sand.—Travel all Night.—Return of Day.—Strange Sight ahead.—Wolves! Wolves!—Fortunate Escape.—The Reason.—Arrival at Point Isabel.—Election of Regimental Officers.—Mustered into Service.—Ordered to Comargo.—Mustered out of Service.—Writer receives Appointment as Surgeon, and accompanies General Taylor.

THE call had been made upon Texas for volunteers. The excitement was at its greatest height, when Colonel Joseph Bennett, one of the veteran officers of the battle of San Jacinto, arrived at Galveston, from the Trinity river, with his partially-organized company of riflemen, on its way to the seat of war. The writer, with several others, was accepted in this company, which now being completed, awaited only the tardy motions of the officer, stationed at this port for the purpose, to furnish the requisite equipments, and transportation to Point Isabel, or

the Island of Brazos, at which places the volunteer forces were then rendezvousing.

About the 23d of May, after two or three other companies of Texians had been dispatched, we were provided with the schooner "Rosella,"—a worthless little tub, which could hardly hold her rotten timbers together while lying in the harbor, and must inevitably go to pieces if caught out in rough weather. She was provisioned and watered for only three days, when she should have had, at least, a week's rations. But probably the *wise and humane* officer concluded, that as there was but little prospect of her reaching her destination, her three days' supplies were enough to invest in so hazardous a venture. There were, at the same time, a number of good staunch vessels open for charter, lying at the wharves; but the petty tyrant was obstinate, and wished to make a show of his authority, this, probably, being the first opportunity he had ever had to do so.

We protested against the inhumanity of crowding into so small and unseaworthy a craft nearly one hundred men, and risking their lives thus unnecessarily. The only reply the upstart deigned to return was—

"Either go on board the 'Rosella' with your men, or go back to the woods, whence you came."

We then applied for two more days' supply of water, but were answered, that "the vessel could not stow another cask." However, our anxiety was so great to get away and join the army before other volunteers arrived, that we concluded to run the risk, and accept of this *Hobson's choice*; and finally, by closely stowing, we managed to pack ourselves into the old condemned vessel.

We had been but two days from port, when a storm came on, which, in an ordinary staunch vessel, we might have easily weathered; but the old rigging and spars could not long stand before it. The gale came, at first, from the northwest, accompanied with hail and rain. At the same time, a current, running from the south along the Texas coast, at the rate of six knots, made a most ugly and uncomfortable sea. Everything not lashed to the deck was soon swept away by the heavy seas the little vessel shipped. The storm increased in violence as the day advanced—the wind, however, veering from northwest, to north, and northeast. The confusion which prevailed among the closely-packed passengers, but few of whom had ever before seen salt water, may be imagined only by those whose fate it has been to be placed in a similar situation.

As the storm worked round to the north, it seemed

to gather strength and fury. With nothing but close-reefed foresail we had been running before it for some time very comfortably ; but, as a sudden squall from that point struck us—crack ! crash !—away flew the sail, blown clean out of its bolt-ropes, —and away it fluttered, in ribbons, to leeward. The same fate awaited the rotten jib ; for, before it was hoisted home, away it went, overboard, dragging under the bows, and, held only by its gasket, became a useless hamper, and was cut adrift.

A moment more, and the vessel, relieved of all canvas, would have broached to, in the trough of the sea ; but the order to get up the main-sail was promptly given, and obeyed. This brought her head once more before the wind. The main-sail was now our only hope ; but the main-gaff boom, which before had been sprung, and patched with battens, no sooner felt the strain of the sail, as it filled away, than—*snap!*—it parted about four feet from the mast ; and down dropped the main-peak.

The pitching and rolling of the vessel increased as the sail was diminished ; and soon our maintop-mast went overboard.

Besides all this, the poor old craft labored so heavily, that the seams were opened, and the brine began to come in upon the men in the hold, to such an extent as greatly to increase the alarm.

By this time, the gale had worked round to the northeast; and, driving before it, we came within hearing of the roaring surf, which, for a long time, had been visible, as it broke over the low, sandy beach.

It was now determined, as the only chance left to us, to run upon the beach, and trust to our individual efforts to reach the shore. It required cool and steady nerves to steer the vessel through the breakers. But, manfully, Jack stood to the helm.

“Keep her head-on! There, so!” was the order of the captain.

“Ay, ay, sir! but, captain, I wish I was taking her into a better port”—and the tears stood in the eyes of the brave sailor, as he braced himself to obey the last order given on board the old “Rosella.”

I will not attempt to describe the fearfully sublime spectacle, of a vessel, crowded with human beings, dashing into the jaws of the maddened breakers, whose foamy spray was tossed above her tallest spars. It was awful to see her rushing on, like a suicide, to voluntary destruction! To me the scene was fearfully grand and exciting. Onward she rushed, for one instant, lifted like a bubble upon the crest of a huge wave, the next, pitched headlong, like a worthless waif, down into the vortex; then,

borne aloft again on a heavier sea than she had before surmounted, she was dashed, with a terrific crash, upon the bottom. This was the moment, as was previously arranged, for every man to quit the object by which he was holding, and throw himself into the next succeeding wave,—trusting to his strength and presence of mind to reach the shore. Again the vessel rose, on the next sea, and, being now lightened of her living freight, was thrown high upon the beach, a broken and worthless wreck.

Fortunately, not a man was lost. We found ourselves upon Padre Island, a wretched, barren sand-bank, one hundred and thirty miles long, extending along the Texas coast, between Corpus Christi and Brazos de Santiago.

The island was destitute of animals; and nothing found existence here, but disgusting sand-crabs, and venomous insects. There was no water, but such as was to be found by digging into the sand, some distance from the beach. This had been furnished by the rains of the previous summer; but was so impregnated with salt, that its taste was nauseous in the extreme. However, to compensate for the bad quality of our water, we did not suffer from hunger. The storm going down, soon after we had reached the shore, we obtained from the wreck, among other necessary articles, fishing-lines and

hooks. Baiting these with sand-crabs, and throwing them into the surf, we soon supplied ourselves with quantities of the delicious *red-fish*,—the trout of the intro-tropical seas. These, with potatoes, bread, and onions, the remnant of the ship-stores, were converted into very tempting *chowder*.

The second day after the wreck, Colonel Bennett, with the greater portion of the men, left for the southern end of the island; where they signaled across the bay, to Brazos Island, and were taken by lighters to the temporary encampment there. Some fifteen or twenty men were left with me at the wreck, until wagons could be ferried across the bay, to remove our effects to the main land at Point Isabel, where the volunteer forces were assembling.

While at the wreck, a pilot-cutter discovered the wreck, and sent a boat through the surf, with a present of bread and other necessities to us, and generously offered to give us a passage to the Brazos.

In a few days the wagons arrived, having found a good road along the smooth beach. Providing myself with a haversack, containing a few biscuits of pilot-bread, a canteen of brackish water, and a single blanket, I concluded to walk ahead, and, when fatigued, to wait for the coming up of the wagons. A young Texian, named Roberts, who had been one of the unfortunate Santa Fé prisoners, and after-

wards was taken again at Mier, proposed to accompany me.

I had been favorably impressed with this man's appearance and deportment during the affair of the wreck. During the whole of that exciting scene, when many were beside themselves with fear, at the prospect of death, Roberts was cool and fearless. He went among the men in the hold, and endeavored to quiet their alarm, assuring them there was but little danger; and, when many had stripped themselves of every article of clothing, in the pitiless storm of sleet, which accompanied the norther, that they might the easier reach the shore, Roberts, reminding them that they would suffer for the want of them, busied himself in gathering up their garments, and throwing them overboard, to be washed ashore, where they were recovered by the owners.

On reaching the shore, the sleet and drifting sand cut like knives. Roberts was the first to set the example to those who had retained all their clothing, by stripping himself of a portion of his own, and dividing them with those who had none. I was satisfied that he was a brave fellow, and one to be depended upon in an emergency, and was glad to have his company.

The morning was excessively hot, with hardly a

breath of air in motion. It was just such weather as, in that latitude, always precedes those cold northers, like the one that had driven us upon the island. As we did not intend to keep far ahead of the wagons, Roberts, accommodating his dress to the weather, had on only hat, cotton shirt and drawers, and boots.

We found the shore for many miles strewed with fragments of wrecks, and boxes, and bales of goods, which had been thrown into the sea from vessels which, perhaps, had been in the same storm that had driven us ashore.

These objects attracted our attention as we came up to them; and others still ahead, invited us to proceed. We frequently found, as we walked along the edge of the surf, fresh cocoa-nuts, Brazil-nuts, and other fruits and plants of more southern latitudes, which, no doubt, had made the voyage from the rivers of the southern continent, on the gulf stream, flowing from that direction, to unite with the other, or more northern branch of it. We observed entire sycamores, and other trees from the forests of the north, which, coming down the Mississippi, and being carried to sea, were also deposited on this shore by the same current. Large logs of mahogany, cut in the forests of Honduras, were strewn along the shore. Quantities of pumice-

stone and lumps of pure bitumen lay here and there upon the sand. From whence these substances came, we could not then determine: particularly the pumice-stone. That bitumen was abundant in the Caribbean Islands, I was aware; and the pumice-stones may have been washed by tropical rains from the base of some extinguished volcano of Central America, and, carried upon the bosom of some river, been thrown out upon the Gulf waters.

Sea-shells and other marine objects, many of rare and beautiful varieties, were abundantly strewn along the water-line of the beach. Of these we would almost involuntarily load ourselves, and as often cast them from us, for others of more beautiful coloring and texture, or of rarer species. Thus, we were led along, from one object to another, till, before we were aware of it, we had left the wagons far behind, and out of sight.

The clouds, in the mean time, indicated the approach of a norther. Rapidly the dark scowling vapors crept up from the northern horizon; then a hissing sound came over the waters, followed immediately by a freezing wind that cut to the bone, whirling the sand about like drifting snow. The sharp crystals cut like needles, as they were blown with force against our persons. Roberts, being

almost naked, suffered extremely: his shirt and thin cotton drawers were no protection to the stinging sand and cold wind. Then came the rain, accompanied with hail and sleet. It was fortunate for us that I had brought a blanket along. This we divided between us, by placing our arms around each other's shoulders, and each holding a corner in front. The storm being at our backs, we were able to *scud* before it. To stop now to wait the approach of the wagons was impossible, as the most rapid locomotion was necessary to keep the blood from congealing in our veins. We proceeded along in this way, the storm increasing in violence as the day advanced. The night, dark and gloomy, came upon us; and still we were obliged to move along, guided by the white line of surf that broke over our feet. Hour after hour we toiled before the pitiless storm, that goaded us onward, till at length, when nearly exhausted, we sought the shelter of the lee-side of the sand-hills beyond the beach. Lying down, side by side, upon the sand, and drawing the blanket over us, we sought to snatch a moment's repose.

Had we suffered ourselves to yield to the sleep our exhausted limbs demanded, it would have been the long last slumber to us. Scarcely had we congratulated ourselves upon the partial protection

we found from the storm, when we found we had another enemy to dread in the drifting sand, which would soon have buried us alive. We had, therefore, no other resource but to take to the beach again, and anxiously hope for the coming day.

At length the wished-for light returned, slowly breaking through the murky clouds to seaward, and revealing the dark bosom of the ocean, lashed and broken into foam, and dashing, in huge waves, upon the shore, as if determined to swallow up the ground beneath us.

On turning a point of sand-hills, my attention was called by an exclamation from Roberts:

“Look—look there! What are those objects approaching us along the edge of the breakers?”

I looked in the direction, and perceived about a dozen animals moving leisurely towards us. They came along, one after the other, in a single line. Not supposing that animal life could find existence on this miserable sand-island, we were at a loss to make them out. But at length, as we approached them nearer, Roberts declared they were wolves of a large and ferocious kind.

The creatures had sighted us, but continued to move along in the same leisurely manner as at first. They were of a blue color, slightly brindled, and of a larger species than I had ever before seen.

The strip of beach between the sand-hills and the breakers, was only a few yards in width; and, totally unarmed, as we were, I had no disposition to come into close quarters with strangers of so unprepossessing appearance. I, therefore, proposed to give them a wide berth, and the entire right of way—which they seemed disposed to claim; and suggested to my friend the propriety of our taking a cut over the sand-ridge.

This he objected to, and thought it best to arm ourselves, each with a good club,—plenty of which were to be found among the drift on the shore,—and show the wolves a determined front. Still, on they came, showing no inclination to give an inch of the path to us. I had a sheath-knife in my haversack, which, till now, I had forgotten; and, with the club in one hand, and the drawn knife in the other, I determined to fight them as long as possible, should they make an attack. Swerving but a little from our direct course, we awaited their approach, still moving slowly toward them. We had no intention to open the battle, on our part, but agreed to let them alone, if they would observe the same peaceful inclination toward us. With menacing growl, and their long, bony tails drawn between their legs, they came up. For an instant—only an instant,—they stopped in the path before us, as if undeter-

mined what to do; then, with their red, vicious eyes glaring vengefully at us, they slowly turned a little to one side—so near, however, that we might have touched them with our clubs, and with their heads over their shoulders, growling defiance, leisurely filed past us. We looked at each other in silence, and simultaneously inspired a full, relieving breath of ocean air; for, to tell the truth, we had not breathed at all for the last few moments.

When the last gaunt devil of them had passed, I could not withstand the temptation of hurling my club at his ugly head. Roberts saw my uplifted hand, and instantly caught it. “What!” said he—“would you have the infernal pack turn upon us? Had you hit that brute, they would not have left so much as a grease-spot of us!”

As may be supposed, we lost no time in increasing the distance between us, and those unwelcome customers. On proceeding a few miles further down the coast, we discovered the reason of the forbearance of the wolves toward us. It was not in consideration of the bold front we presented to them, as we had flattered ourselves; but they had been regaling all night upon some carcasses of beeves that had been cast upon the beach, and, probably, washed overboard, in the storm, from some vessel bound down to the army.

On arriving at Point Isabel, we found the ten companies had now all arrived; and as volunteer troops had the election of their own officers, we proceeded to that important business. The company officers had been chosen, and the companies organized before leaving home. It now only remained for us to elect our regimental officers.

There were a number of candidates for the office of colonel, among whom was General Lamar. This gentleman, who had been president of the ex-republic, and commander-in-chief of its army and navy, afterward commanded a company of rangers.

Our choice fell upon General A. Sidney Johnson, a Texan veteran, whose election we had no cause, afterward, to regret. He was every inch a soldier and gentleman.

We were then mustered into the service, under the name of the "First Regiment of Texas Rifles."

We remained but a few weeks at the Point, and were ordered up the Rio Grande to Comargo. But as General Taylor determined to proceed from this place only with twelve months men, our regiment, being engaged only for the term of six months, was paid off, and again we were mustered—out of the service.

On disbanding, the members of the regiment were received into other volunteer regiments and compa-

nies, that were not as full as the regulations permitted.

Here, I received my appointment, as surgeon, and soon after accompanied General Taylor on the march toward Monterey.

CHAPTER III.

Ingredients of a Volunteer Regiment.—No place like an Army to develop Character.—Captain Cheshire's Prayer-meetings.—Our Orderly-Sergeant Fry.—The Kangaroo Club.—Rules of the Club.—Place of Meeting.—Fount of Inspiration.—Programme of Proceedings, and Initiation.—Sergeant Fry called upon for a Story.—“Old San Jacinto” and the Galveston Jew ; or how the General was done for.—Jimmy Tweed.—Jimmy as a Santa Fé Prisoner.—A Standing and Swift Witness.—Jimmy's Testimony.—Death of Jimmy.—Jimmy Byrne's “Brian O'Linn.”—Jimmy Byrne a Famous Hunter.—His *Lion* Hunt.—A slight Mistake.—Jimmy's Call on Colonel Johnson.—The Loan of the Nagur's Horse.—Origin of “*Slow Deer*.”—Jimmy not always in Luck.—Promotion and Death of Jimmy Byrne.

IN a company of several hundred men, like a volunteer regiment, made up of individuals from every grade and class of society,—from the statesmen and founders of a republic, to the humble member of the “finest pisantry;” where wealthy planters, and professional men, students, and clerks, fresh from the counting-house, backwoodsmen and Indian-fighters, adventurers, and men of “no visible means” are congregated together,—and where is represented every profession, and almost every country,—it would be natural to suppose that every phase of

human nature would be encountered. Perhaps this was more particularly so with the *First Rifles*, than with any other volunteer organization in our army. There is no place like an army, to develop the peculiar traits of each individual. Selfishness, generosity, and all the best and worst features of the human heart here reveal themselves. A few months' companionship in camp, makes men better acquainted with each other, than a lifetime spent together under any other circumstances.

We had not long been settled in camp, when it was observed that little circles and associations were springing up amongst men of similar tastes and education,—a mutual attraction and affinity of minds of congenial elements.

Captain Cheshire, from Eastern Texas, had fitted up a large tent, for the accommodation of those who felt piously inclined:—whence, on a calm moonlight night, the melody of psalm-singing, sermonizing, and prayer, resounded over the camp. The chief orator, on these occasions, was our orderly-sergeant Fry. He was a decided character, and deserves a passing notice. The Sergeant was the tallest man in our regiment, being six feet nine in his stockings, and was slim and straight as an Indian; long favored, with blue eyes, and pleasant countenance, and a nose of huge proportions.

Whether he belonged to the Methodist, Baptist, or Universalist persuasion, could not be ascertained from his discourses. One thing, however, was certain,—if he was a Methodist, there was not much *method* in his eloquence. He never touched upon doctrinal points; and when not holding forth to his congregation, there was nothing of the parson in his manner, unless it was his general good-nature, and friendly smile, and word for every one he met. The Sergeant declared “he had volunteered to look after the spiritual interest of the boys. That he meant to serve the Lord; but, if duty required him to shoot Mexicans, why,—he thought he could do so, and look to heaven with a clear conscience.” He was one of those pious soldiers, who could trust to Providence, but chose to take care of his own powder.

The Sergeant was a prominent member of the “*Kangaroo Club*.” This was a moonlight association, got up by the young bloods of the regiment. Each member of this club was called upon, in turn, either to sing a song, or tell a good story; the forfeit or penalty for declining, was to take the place of some other member, at his regular turn of guard-mounting.

The place of meeting of this club was on the plain, a short distance beyond the limits of the



camp. Here they would form a circle on the ground,—à la Turk,—with a large canteen, labeled “*brandy*,” in the centre of the group. This was christened the “*Fount of Inspiration*.” When a guard had been placed around the outside, to keep out the uninitiated, the meeting was called to order. First in the programme of proceedings, is, the introduction and initiation of candidates. One is introduced at a time. He is invited, with much formality, to take a seat in the circle, when the president directs the fount to be passed to the new comer. The Kangaroo, seated at his right hand, steps to the centre, and, taking the canteen of liquor by the strap, returns to the side of the candidate. First shaking it well, to his ear, to ascertain that it is full, he slowly draws the stopper, and applies his nose to the bung, to test the quality of the contents. Apparently not satisfied with this inspection, he next places it to his lips, and, throwing his head back as if to see the moon, takes a long hearty draught. Slowly bringing his head forward again, he lets the canteen gradually subside upon his lap; and then, inhaling a long breath, rounded off with an audible smack of approval, proceeds to pronounce an eulogium upon “that most excellent and extra Cognac,” and desires to know of the president “where such good liquor is to be found.”

The candidate for Kangaroo honors is very impatiently waiting, all this time, for his share of the good stuff. But he is doomed to disappointment;—for no sooner does he reach out his hand to grasp the canteen, than the next right hand man snatches it away;—and thus, with similar pantomime, as at first, it makes the round of the circle of Kangaroos. The candidate watches its passage with fear and trembling, lest, when it should finally get round to him, his share would be but small. Already his throat is parched, and he begins to “spit cotton.” He is actually suffering a sort of martyrdom, when, at last, the vessel reaches him. He greedily places it to his lips, nor stops to taste,—till he has imbibed several swallows; when,—bah!—he finds he has been most egregiously *sold*.—He has been drinking the brackish water of the lagoon!

The Kangaroos, who have been maintaining the utmost gravity up to this moment, now give vent to a general shout of merriment; and the half-vexed, half-laughing candidate, is duly proclaimed a genuine Kangaroo, and called upon for his song or story.

I had gone through the initiatory ceremony of this brotherhood one calm summer’s night, and had contributed my mite to the general fund of amusement, when Sergeant Fry, who happened

to be my right hand neighbor, was called upon for a story.

"Well, boys," said he, "I have no objection to doing extra guard duty; and I will leave it to you to say, whether I shall do so, or tell a story."

"A story, a story, Sergeant! give us a story!" cried some.

"No, no! a song, a song, from the Sergeant," insisted others.

"Order, boys; you all know I can sing nothing but psalm-tunes, and they would not be exactly appropriate to the occasion. Come up to Capt. Cheshire's tent, to-morrow night, and I will be happy to furnish you with one of the songs of Zion."

"Agreed, agreed," was the response, "we'll all be there, Sergeant; but now give us a story."

"Well, well—but what shall it be?"

"O! give us something about Old Jacinto, Sergeant."

"Well, then, I'll tell you how the old general was done by the Galveston Jew.

"Now most of you are, no doubt, familiar with the character of the old hero;—if so, you know that two of his most prominent traits are vanity and a too common tendency to overlook or forget his little personal liabilities to the small traders and

shopkeepers he may chance to honor with his patronage. As a consequence of this latter peculiarity, his paper is often in market at a sad discount. It is too bad, boys; but such is the fact.

“Now it happened, that a sly old fox of an Israelite, who dealt in ready-made clothing and other Jew notions, and who never let any chance escape, whereby he might “shave a few pennies,” became the holder of one of Houston’s I. O. U.’s, which he had found floating round, and bought it at a bargain.

“Hearing, one day, that the general was in town, old Levi set his wits at work to turn this paper into something more substantial than ‘I promise to pay.’

“While cogitating the matter in his mind, his obscure shop was made still darker by the shadow, in his door, of his friend Jacobs, who thus opportunely arrived to his aid. The plan of attack was soon arranged between the two Israelites, and it was determined to assault old Jacinto on his weak side. Jacobs, who was intimately acquainted with him,—for you know the general is noted for his easy familiarity,—was to waylay him in the street, and, as if by pure accident, the two were to pass by Levi’s shop. The latter was to have his masked battery drawn up in his door.

“Accordingly, Jacobs wended his way to the

saloon, you remember, directly opposite the Tremont, where he found the general, in a very agreeable humor, in the midst of a party of old friends, who were discussing the prospect of annexation.

“The Jew entered the circle, and drank to the success of his cherished friend, and to his rising greatness; and, entering into conversation with the group, passed part of the morning very agreeably. When his excellency left the saloon to go down the strand, he was joined by Jacobs, who easily led him in the direction of the shop of his countryman,—where the following scene occurred: Stopping suddenly, in front of Levi’s door, Jacobs saluted the clothes-man, as if he had not met him before for months, and begged the pleasure of presenting him to the ‘world-renowned General Houston.’

“The little black eyes of the Jew snapped fire, with surprise and pleasure, as he rushed to embrace the general.

“‘Is’t possible dat I av de honor to see—to spheak to de great sheneral, de *great hero* of San Jachinto! Oh! Fader Moses! how proud I am! Is’t possible dat I schakes de hand of de greatest sheneral vot ever has lived! de greatest man in Texas—in all America! Oh! mine Got! mine Got! vat honor!’

“‘My friend,’ replied old San Jacinto, ‘you do me too much honor.’

“‘No! nevare—dat ist impossible, sheneral; *you* do *me* de honor to spheak to so poor a shentleman. But, tank Got! I av de great shatisfaction to av de name of so great man, vich he make mit his own hand, on one leetle bit papier.’

“‘What!’ says Houston—‘you have my name to a paper? what is it? let me see it!’

“‘Oh! sheneral, it is noting—I mean de papier—it is noting but von leetle note, vich I buy for noting but the name on it. Dat is vorth mutch moneys to me—de name of de great hero of San Jachinto!’

“‘You have a note, then, against me, have you? I have no recollection of ever giving you one. I hope you got it at a bargain.’

“‘At a bargain, you say, sheneral; yes sir, it cost me no more dan one huntred and twenty-five dollar. I keeps it for noting but de name, writ by de hand of de great man himself.’

“Houston insisted upon seeing the note, which was given for the sum of one hundred dollars, and which the Jew had probably bought at a discount of fifty per cent. After a great deal of apparent reluctance on the part of Levi, the note was produced. Houston, feeling flattered by the reception

he met with by the Jew, and not being willing, as he said, to have his note for so small an amount unpaid, insisted upon canceling it upon the spot. Nothing but the respect which Levi had for 'de sheneral' induced the holder to give it up; and, after some well-feigned hesitation, it was handed over to the general, who immediately counted out the amount of it into the hands of the Jew.

"Houston's vanity had been flattered by the wily Israelite, who, from a knowledge of his weak point, had cajoled him into paying a debt which nothing else would ever have forced him to. And Old Jacinto tore up the paper, with the air of a man who had done a most generous and noble act of magnanimity.

"As he left the shop, the exultation of old Shylock was as great as that of the 'done' hero on the plain of San Jacinto.

"But the cream of the joke, boys, is yet to come.

"The two Jews, thinking the trick too neatly done to keep to themselves, soon enlightened their brethren in the same street, and from them it leaked out to the ears of some waggish friends of the general, who were elated at a chance to crack it upon him. Now, you know, the 'sheneral' loves a joke as well as any other man,—when it is not at his own expense. He felt he had been *done* by a

damned Jew,—had been wheedled into paying a debt. It was too bad! and, with threats of vengeance, he sallied forth to cowhide the ‘rascally renegade from Chatham street.’

“But the Jew, having timely notice from some of his friends, was still too shrewd for the general, and had made good his escape on board the Brazos steamer, and remained up that river till notified that his enemy had returned to his plantation, up the Trinity.

“Thus, boys, was the hero of San Jacinto conquered by the Jew!”

Another “character”—and an *honorary* member of the Kangaroo Club, was Jimmy Tweed. He was our regimental drummer; and many a pleasant morning dream has he spoiled by his sleep-banishing *reveille*. Jimmy was a noted personage, and had several times figured in print. He had been one of the Santa Fé prisoners; and Kendall, in his account of this expedition, thus brings him before the public. He says: “Among the prisoners were a number of lawyers, doctors, and other professional men—persons who, either from a love of wild adventure, or because they could obtain no professional employment in Texas, had originally been induced to join the expedition. Then there were several comedians amongst them—mad wags, who, finding that the

drama yielded them but slender support in the new republic, had shouldered the rifle and taken to the prairies for a better. Out of such materials, it may readily be conceived that the richest fun and frolic could be extracted; and the story of one of their maddest pranks I will relate.

“The wags knew that among the officers and merchants there were some who had money; and, to levy a tax upon such pockets as were best filled, these fellows commenced a game which, in the end, not only proved every way successful, but afforded infinite amusement to all. They, in the first place, fitted up an old, dilapidated apartment as a courtroom. With two barrels and as many boards, they made a kind of platform, upon which, as a bench, a closet-box was placed, and upon this the jokers seated the largest prisoner in the whole collection as judge;—a half-lawyer, who, in addition to having all the gravity of the Grand Turk himself, wore whiskers, mustache, and hair in quantity sufficient to supply the wigs of an entire bench of English judges. A sheriff, crier, and clerk—men who well understood their business,—were then appointed. An eccentric comedian, who could speak for hours upon any subject, and possessed the keenest wit and the strongest imitative powers imaginable, was chosen prosecuting attorney. As principal witness

in any case that might be brought, they fell upon a little Irishman, named Jimmy Tweed. Jimmy was born and bred a soldier. He first drew breath in a barrack of a recruiting regiment in Ireland, and, in process of time, after having picked up a fair education among the officers, joined the regiment as a soldier. The term of his enlistment, he served principally at Gibraltar, where he obtained a name,—to use his own words,—‘for being up to all manner of diviltry,’ and where he also learned a smattering of Spanish. On being discharged, he visited the United States, joined the army, served two or three campaigns in Florida, and was finally regularly discharged at Baton Rouge, in Louisiana. To finish his education, as he said, he then went to Texas, and, after various campaigns, was finally taken prisoner in New Mexico. He had all the wit of his countrymen, and a fund of dry humor which was inexhaustible.

“Thus organized,” continues Kendall, “the court proceeded to the trial of such causes as they thought might be turned to their own profit. More decorum, more order, or more gravity of deportment was never seen in any court of justice. The crier, in some way, procured a small bell, and, in regular form, called the court together, and issued his proclamations. The sheriff, with all the dignity

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imaginable, commanded silence, compelled all to take off their hats, and was very efficient in keeping the best order. The first action upon their singular law-docket was brought against a young and very worthy man, a merchant, who was charged with being 'a great fool generally.' I am not altogether positive but that the first word in the indictment may have been a much more forcible adjective than the simple term 'great.'

"The judge remarked, that the charge was one extremely grave in its character, and admitted that he could not, at the time, think of any precedent that might guide him in his decision, which, he wound up by saying, should be a just and a righteous one. The prosecuting attorney, after a few pertinent remarks, brought up several witnesses to sustain the charge. Their evidence—which, of course, was made up, and suited for the meridian of this particular court alone—all went to support the prosecution. The case, as made out, was clear enough;—not a doubt arose as to the truth of the charge set forth in the indictment;—but, to make all sure, Jimmy Tweed was brought to the stand. After kissing a brickbat with due gravity—there being no Bible in the court—Jimmy proceeded with his testimony.

"He instanced several particulars in which the

accused party had evinced very little foresight;—mentioned several of his actions, which manifested great lack of judgment and knowledge of the world; and finally wound up by saying, that the fact alone of his being found in company with the Santa Fé Expedition was ample evidence against him.

“At this point of the trial, symptoms of uproarious laughter were manifested in court;—all which were instantly quelled by the sheriff; and the judge then proceeded to give his decision. Drawing himself up, throwing back his head, and clearing his throat with a preparatory ‘hem,’ and then, raising one leg over the other with all becoming dignity, he remarked, that all the evidence bore strongly against the accused, but that the testimony of the last witness in particular, view it in what light he would, clearly sustained the charge that the arraigned party was slightly afflicted with a weakness known as the ‘simples’—troubled with not being as wise as he might and should have been. He admitted that the charge, which had been thus proved, was a misfortune rather than a crime; but, inasmuch as the times were hard and victuals scarce, he should impose a fine of two dollars upon the accused. The latter, who enjoyed the joke as well as any one, interposed no motion in arrest of judgment, but paid the fine at once; and thus ended the first trial.

“One of our officers, Capt. H., was charged with bad singing; or rather, as the indictment read, ‘with attempting to sing, and making out badly at best.’ A number of witnesses testified that, at different times, they had been most excessively annoyed, even to the losing of sleep, by the attempts of the accused at divers songs. They all admitted, during a process of cross-questioning, that they were not exactly good judges of music; still they considered themselves blessed with ears, which taught them to distinguish between the warbling of a canary and that of a crow:—thought they could discover a soothing influence in the notes of a nightingale, which they missed in the braying of a donkey. But, as the testimony of Tweed went directly to prove the charge, and was a perfect gem in its way, I shall give it, as nearly as possible, in his own words:

“‘Yer ’oner,’ said Jimmy, with a ludicrous mock gravity and quizzical leer of his dexter eye, ‘yer ’oner, as I was walkin’ across the corral last evenin’, I heerd sthrange, mystarius, and most unnathral sounds issuin’ from the officers’ quarthurs up stairs; sounds rezimblin’, yer ’oner, those made by a saw-mill whin in the full tide of manufacthrin’ boords. Well, me curiasity bein’ excited, I bethought meself I’d be afther investigatin’ the thing; so whin I was *abajo*, yer ’oner—which is the best Spanish I have

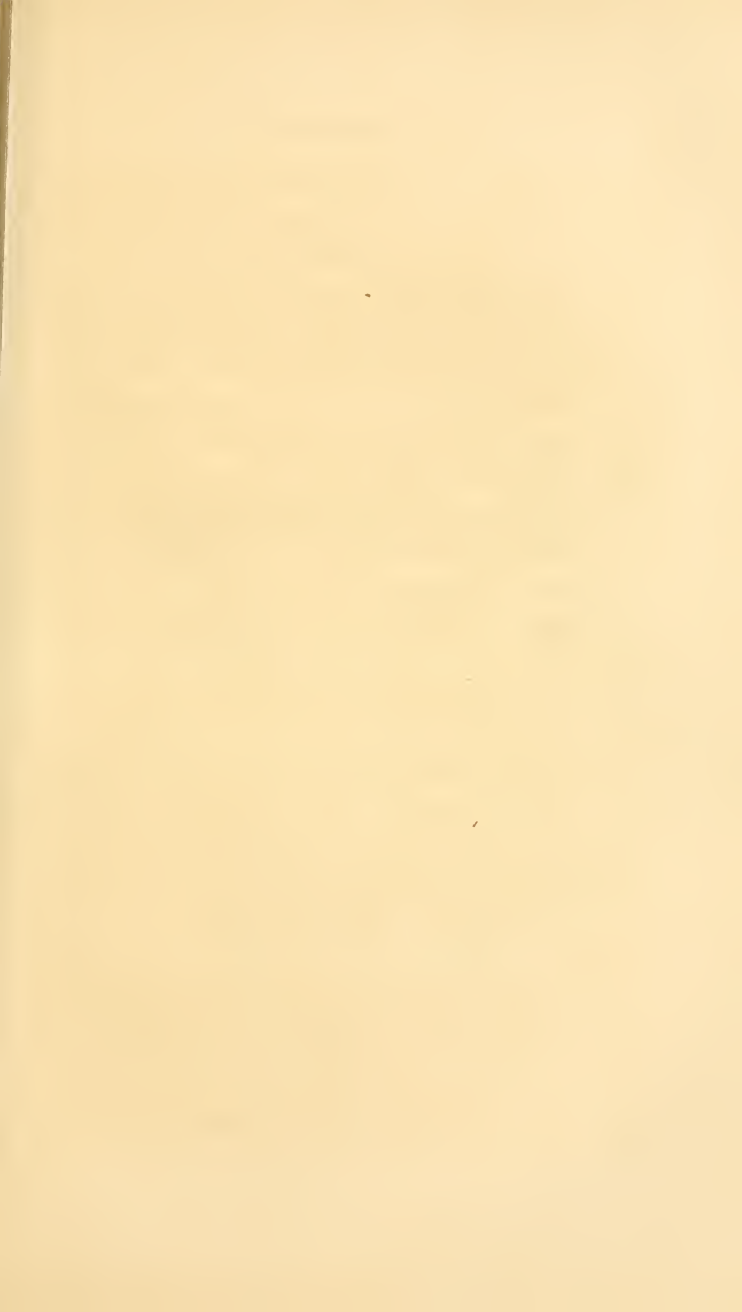
at prisint about me, for the feet of the stairs ;—I heerd the sthrange sounds louder and louder nor iver. Up the stips I wint, and, whin I was *arriba*,—which manes, yer 'oner, the head of the stairs ;—divil a bit did it stop, at all, at all. What, in the name of all the saints, thinks I to meself, has put a saw-mill in operashun here away—for I still thought it was one, yer 'oner—so I opened the door cautiously, poked me head in slyly, and what should me own eyes see, and me own ears heer, but Captain H. himself, essayin' a bit of a ditty, yer 'oner.'

“ ‘Doing *what* ? ’ questioned the judge.

“ ‘Essayin' a ditty, yer 'oner—attemptin' a stave of a song ; and—

“ ‘Enough,' interrupted the high functionary upon the closet-box. ‘If you mistook the singing of Captain H. for those sounds ordinarily produced by a saw-mill, the case is clear enough that he has undertaken a task which neither nature nor cultivation fits him to carry successfully through ; and I shall fine him one dollar and fifty cents for the attempt.’ ”

Poor Jimmy is now no more. On the disbanding of our regiment, he was received into a company of rangers,—for he loved the Texians,—and proceeded with them to Monterey. In the battle there, Jimmy was one of the first to enter the *Bishop's Palace*,





BRIAN O'LENN'S LION HUNT.—Page 47.

where he was killed;—dying, as he had lived, a jolly and brave-hearted soldier.

Jimmy Byrne—or, as he was more familiarly known in the regiment, by the name of Brian O'Linn,—was another “character,” and a good deal of a genius in *his* way. He was also, as his name indicates, a native of

“The swatest isle of the ocean.”

Jimmy was a lively little fellow, always full of fun and frolic, and at all times ready with a song:—indeed, music seemed to flow spontaneously from his lungs. Sometimes, even when on our regimental drill, he would provoke a general concatenation of laughter along the line, by an involuntary troll of a verse of his favorite song:

“Brian O'Linn had no breeches to wear,
So he got him a sheep-skin and made him a pair;
With the woolly side out, and the skinny side in,
They're a snug pair of breeches, says Brian O'Linn.”

Jimmy had taken it into his head that he was a wonderful shot, though, to tell the truth, a hod had oftener graced his shoulder than a rifle. With the latter instrument in his hand, he was fond of making excursions from the camp, and fancying himself a perfect Nimrod.

On one occasion, just at night, after being absent all day, Jimmy made his appearance, with a coun-

tenance full of importance, and bursting with anxiety to communicate some wonderful piece of information.

"Well, Jimmy, have you met St. Patrick to-day?" inquired Capt. Bennett, "or have you had a rencontre with the Mexican army?"

"Nather one nor the other, captain," replied Jim, with his big gray eyes distended nearly out of their sockets. "But, captain, tell me, if yer plaze, sur—are there any *lions* in this counthry?"

"Any what?"

"Any *lions*, captain."

"Lions! why, no; not that I am aware of," says the captain. "Jimmy, have you had a fight with lions to-day?"

"Not exactly a fight, sur; but, sure's me name's Jim Byrne, I had a *sight* of one of the bludy crathurs."

"Are you sure it was a lion?" asked the captain. "Maybe it was a skunk, Jimmy."

"*Skunk!*" contemptuously repeated Jimmy. "Do you take me for a fule, entirely, captain! Haven't I seen the picthers of the bastes; and don't I know a lion sure? It's meself, captain, has seen a rale genewine lion to-day."

"Well! why did you not shoot it?" smilingly demanded the captain.

“Why didn’t I shoot it! sure it’s the bludy auld iron as wouldn’t shoot straight at all, at all. Now, captain, jewel, will yer be so kind as to be afther giving me the loan of yer big two-barriled gun, yonder, and let me give the crathur another hunt to-morrow? Be the powers, it’s meself ’ll bring yer a rale lion, or you may put me on guard ivery day for a month, sure.”

The next morning, while his countryman, Jimmy Tweed, was rattling off his lively wide-awakening notes of the *reveille*, Jimmy Byrne, with the captain’s double-barreled deer-gun on his shoulder, *à la militaire*, was seen marching out of camp on his way to “beard the *lion* in his den.”

As the regiment was drawn up for the regular afternoon drill, our little Hibernian hove in sight, a long distance off, on the prairie. He seemed to be heavily loaded with something, and advanced but slowly towards camp. The drill was over by the time that Jimmy had arrived; and as he entered the lines on one side of the camp, before the men had returned from the parade-ground, on the other, Captain Bennett and myself, who occupied the same tent together, were the first to meet him.

Jimmy came up, and, throwing the huge carcass of a yellow *wolf* upon the ground before us, straightened himself to his full height, threw back his shoul-

ders, and, with the air of an Alexander, when he had conquered the world, pointed to the disgusting animal, and exclaimed :

“ *See there, now, Captain Bennett!—do ye call that a skunk? It’s meself that takes the liberty to tell ye it’s a rale, thrue lion.*”

This adventure had nearly proved the death of poor Jimmy;—and he never heard the last of his *lion-hunt*. He was now christened “Brian, the lion killer;” and, in spite of his reiterated assertion, of “sure and didn’t I know meself, all the time, that it was a wolf,” he could not escape the gibes and jokes of his comrades. Some time passed away, before Jimmy could prevail upon himself to undertake another hunt.

One day, however, he had been absent for some hours, and on returning to camp, had not a word to say to any one he chanced to meet, but walked directly to the colonel’s tent. The colonel was writing at his table, when he was aroused by the entrance of Jimmy, hat in hand. He at once perceived a request expressed in the comical face of the little Irishman, and good-naturedly inquired, “what he would have?”

“Colonel, if you plaze, sur,—and if it would not be axin’ too great a favor, sur,—will yer lend me the loan of yer nagur’s horse for a bit.”

“Why! what do you want with my boy’s horse, my good fellow?”

“Well, you see, colonel, betwix yer honor and Jim Byrne,—that’s meself, yer know, I’ve just shot a big deer out yander a bit, and I thought, mayhaps, as ye’d like a quarther of that same, ye’d be afther givin’ me the loan of yer nagur’s horse to bring it into camp, just.”

“O! very well, very well, my good man,” replied the colonel; “you are welcome to the horse, but remember the orders, and never let me know of your ever shooting any of the cattle of the Mexicans.”

“Indeed, sur, yer may trust me intirely for that. It’s not meself would shoot one of the innocent crathurs at all.”

Mounting the horse of the colonel’s servant, Jimmy was soon bounding away over the prairie. After awhile he was seen returning with the horse loaded down with the beef of a yearling calf, skinned and neatly cut into quarters. However, in his haste to dress the animal, he had left the entire tail attached to one of the quarters.

He bent his course first to Col. Johnson’s tent. That officer was standing outside as Jimmy arrived; and, untying one of the pieces, asked, “where would he have it laid?”

The *tail* attracted the eye of the colonel, who sternly demanded—

“What have you here, sir?”

“It’s the deer, yer honor,” replied Jimmy, with a scrape of the left foot, and his hand to his cap:—
“It’s the deer that I tould yer honor I’d bring yer a quarther of.”

“What *kind* of a deer do you call *this*?” cried the colonel, as he reached out his hand and took hold of the long tuft of hair at the end of the tail.
“Answer me, sir; what kind of a *deer* have you here?”

“What kind! yer honor,” replied Jimmy, with an honest, child-like simplicity of countenance—such only as an Irishman can assume, on an occasion,—“I’m sure I don’t know, yer honor,—not bein’ much varshed in the crathur; but I belave they call it the *slow* kind.”

The colonel had not another question to ask; but thanked Jimmy for the *venison*, and acknowledged to himself, that he had received new light in relation to the natural history of the *genus cervus*.

This affair was no sooner made known, than the little hunter was immediately reinstated in public opinion, and the little mistake of the lion was overlooked, in consideration of the general service he

had rendered, in classifying a species of game, the most abundant of all others in the vicinity of the camp.

But Jimmy Byrne was not always in luck, as will be seen. He was not only fond of the sports of the hunt, but often purveyed for his company as a fisherman. Many a fine red-fish have I partaken of at his expense,—for it was only to the members of the other companies that he would *sell* anything from his commissariat. He had found along the shore of the Lagoon de la Madre a bed of very fine oysters, which, by wading out into the water, he could gather up in clusters from the bottom. He had supplied his company with several messes of these luscious mollusca, before he would reveal to others, but his friend, Jimmy Tweed, the place of their deposit.

One morning, while at breakfast, our ears were saluted by the most doleful cries, mingled with adjurations and curses. “Och! blessed Vargin, it hurts! I’m murthered, I’m murthered—it’s kilt I am, intirely! Damn the bludy luck—I’m ruined. Oh! muther, muther—Howly Vargin, but it hurts! Oh! oh!”

On running out of the tent to ascertain the cause of all this outcry, we beheld Jimmy Byrne borne along on the shoulders of our little drummer,

who, directing his steps to where we were standing, deposited his burden upon the ground.

"What is the matter, Jimmy?" asked I, as I stooped to examine his wounds.

"Mather? mather enough, sur. Look there! Oh! murther! it's the divil's own bludy tail that's run through me foot. Oh! oh!"

I looked at his foot, and found the barbed sting of a *stingaree* deeply imbedded in his heel.

It seemed, from Jimmy Tweed's account,—for the sufferer could not cease his exclamations of pain long enough to answer my questions,—that the two were in the lagoon groping for oysters, when Jimmy Byrne suddenly screamed out, and fell into the water, and probably would have drowned, had not his friend hastened to his relief, and dragged him out, with the poisonous fish flapping at his foot. Not being able to extract the barbed sting, Jimmy said he was obliged first to cut off the tail of the fish, and then to separate the sting from the tail. He then loaded him upon his shoulders and brought him to camp.

The removal of the barb required a painful operation, and for several days the poor fellow could find no relief from pain, only as he was under the influence of narcotics; and it was weeks before he recovered entirely the use of his foot.

On the mustering out of the regiment, Jimmy Byrne was “promoted”—to use his own words—“to the command of a wagon and a five-mule team.” He continued faithfully in this employ, till the poor fellow was murdered by Urrea’s party, at the time of the massacre of the train near Marin. Peace to his memory !

CHAPTER IV.

The Army leaves Comargo for Cerralvo.—Orders for the March.—Establishment of General Hospital.—Old Convent.—General Quitman.—His Kindness to the Sick.—Interview with the Alcalde.—Disappearance of that Worthy.—Cerralvo.—Silver Mines.—Imperfect Manner of working them.—Don Francisco Lozano's Account of their Discovery.—Beneficial Effects of the Change from the Lower Country.—Pure Water.—The Mississippians.—Our Little Commissary.—Corn-dodgers and Corn-mills.—A Benefit.—“Those Black-guard Volunteers.”—Incident, illustrative of Mexican Character.—Murder of a Mississippian.—Juan La Vaca.—Excitement amongst Citizens.—The Murderer arrested.—Examination.—Confession of Guilt.—Mother and Son.—Indifference to Death.—Attempt to buy off.—Alone with the Priest.—Execution.—Change in Public Sentiment.—Priest pockets the Gold.—Epidemic among Children.—Priestly Assertion.—Custom of Burial of Children.—Gay Procession.—Patron Saints of the Sick.—Fees, how dispensed.

GENERAL TAYLOR broke up his camp at Comargo on the 6th of September, and moved on to Cerralvo, a neat and well-built little town, with a population of about 3,000 previous to the war. At this time, most of its citizens had left, some to join the Mexican army, others for the haciendas and ranchos at a distance from the line of march of the American army.

Here the commanding-general issued the following orders :

“ 1. As the army may expect to meet resistance in the further advance towards Monterey, it is necessary that its march should be conducted with all proper precaution, to meet attack and secure the baggage and supplies.

“ From this point, the following will be the order of march, till otherwise directed :

“ 2. All the pioneers of the army, consolidated into one party, will start early to-morrow (11th) on the march to Marin, for the purpose of repairing the roads and rendering it practicable for artillery and wagons. The pioneers of each division will be under a subaltern, to be especially detailed for the duty, and the whole will be under Captain Craig, third infantry, who will report to headquarters for instructions. This pioneer party will be covered by a squadron of dragoons, and Captain M'Culloch's company of rangers. Two officers of topographical engineers, to be detailed by Captain Williams, will accompany the party, for the purpose of examining the route. Two wagons will be provided by the quartermaster's department for the transportation of the tools, provisions, and knapsacks of the pioneer party.

“ 3. The first division will march on the 13th

instant, to be followed on successive days by the second division and the field division of volunteers. The headquarters will march with the first division. Captain Gillespie, with half his company, will report to Major-general Butler; the other half, under the first lieutenant, to Brigadier-general Worth. These detachments will be employed for outposts and videttes, and as expresses between the columns and headquarters.

“4. The subsistence supplies will be divided between the three columns, the senior commissary of each division receipting for the stores, and being charged with their care and management. The senior commissaries of divisions will report to Captain Waggaman for this duty.

“5. Each division will be followed immediately by its baggage-train and supply-train, with a strong rear-guard. The ordnance-train, under Captain Ramsay, will march with the second division, between its baggage and supply-train, and will come under the protection of the guard of that division. The medical supplies will, in like manner, march with the first division.

“6. The troops will take eight days' rations and forty rounds of ammunition. All surplus arms and accoutrements, resulting from casualties on the road, will be deposited with Lieutenant Stewart,

left in charge of the dépôt at this place, who will give certificates of deposit to the company commanders.

“7. The wagons appropriated for transportation of water will not be required, and will be turned over to the quartermaster’s department for general purposes.

“8. Two companies of the Mississippi regiment will be designated for the garrison of this place. All sick and disabled men, unfit for the march, will be left behind under charge of a medical officer to be selected for this duty by the medical director.”

In accordance with the last section of the above orders, the author was instructed to establish, and take charge of a general hospital at this post. I did not receive the order till the evening previous to the march of the first division; and no provision having been previously made for the sick,—such as hospital accommodations, etc.—there was necessarily considerable confusion in the arranging and disposing of the men for the night.

My orders were to take possession of such buildings, belonging to the citizens, as I deemed most convenient for the purpose. The largest and most suitable place for an hospital had already been appropriated by Lieutenant Stewart as a commissary dépôt. This was a large roomy building, with

an interior court, which had formerly been occupied as a convent, but had been some time unoccupied, though still in good repair. This building I occupied subsequently, when we were obliged to concentrate our little party, under the more immediate protection of the garrison.

While engaged in receiving the sick, receipting for their arms and equipments, and directing them to such quarters as I had temporarily selected for them, a general officer, with a number of the sick of Colonel Jeff. Davis' regiment, called upon me, and introduced himself as General Quitman. He said, that observing I had much to do, he had come to tender me his assistance in disposing of his men. He loaded himself with the knapsacks and arms of the sick soldiers, and, directing such as were able to follow him, made them as comfortable as the circumstances would admit, in such houses as I had designated. He then returned, loaded himself again, and, with another party, returned to the work. Thus he continued the greater part of the night—each time handing me the descriptive-lists of the men he had disposed of. The general exhibited a paternal regard for the men of his command, having a kind word of encouragement and sympathy for each.

It was in this way, this kind-hearted and brave

officer won the love and esteem of his soldiers, and subsequently became one of the most popular and esteemed officers of the army. Having thus disposed of the sick for the night, the general proposed that we should call upon the Alcalde, to whom, he said, he wished to leave some orders in reference to the accommodation and future convenience of myself, and the men under my charge.

On reaching the residence of that functionary, we found the occupants had long since retired to sleep. Our summons, however, soon aroused the Alcalde, who, with much fear and trembling, opened the door. The hour was an unseemly one, it was true, for official business, and, no doubt, he at first took us to be a party in search of plunder. But when, with trembling hands, he managed, at last, to light a candle, and observed the uniform of the general, and that of Captain Sharp, who accompanied us, he mustered courage, invited us in, and brought us seats.

Having some knowledge of Spanish, the general requested me to state the object of the visit,—which was to request his official influence, in obtaining fresh supplies of such provisions as I might require for the use of the sick, and demanding his protection of them in their intercourse with the citizens; ending, by informing him of his—the general's—rank,

and an assurance, that he should hold him personally responsible for any harm that should happen to any of my men among his people.

Whether it was, that the Alcalde felt the responsibility too heavy for his narrow shoulders to bear, or not, I cannot say ; it is very certain, however, that that was the last interview I ever had with that worthy personage. I was told the next morning, that he had departed before daylight for his rancho. Whether he had abdicated, and gone into philosophical retirement, or had joined the forces of the enemy, I know not. He never made his appearance again, while we were in possession of the town.

Cerralvo is pleasantly situated at the foot of a range of mountains, from which the town derives its name. In these mountains are said to exist rich deposits of silver. For many years, six or seven mines were worked, and yielded a rich revenue to the town—the place having sprung up after the discovery of these mines. But at length, the miners being much molested by the Indians, and the water accumulating more rapidly than, with their imperfect *malacates*, or bull's-hide buckets, they could clear them, they were obliged to abandon them. The miners appear to have been very unskillful in extracting the metal from the ores, and the furnaces

used for this purpose were of the most primitive construction.

I discovered, in one of my morning rides, at the base of the mountain, one of these furnaces. It was surrounded by large heaps of slag, much of which appeared to have been but partially melted. On breaking open a lump of this, particles of the pure metal might be seen filling up the interstices. Indeed I have no doubt that an enterprising party, with suitable apparatus, might extract a fortune from these piles of rubbish.

I was informed by intelligent Mexicans, that these mines might, with small comparative expense, be emptied, and restored to working order.

Don Francisco Lozano, a friend of mine, and a very intelligent property-holder in the town, gave me the following account of the discovery of these mines :

An ancestor of his, of his own name, who was a *peon*, had charge of a herd of goats, the property of his master, and was accustomed to drive them to feed on the plain at the base of the mountain. Sometimes the animals would be tempted, by the feed to be found amongst the rocks, to climb the mountains. On one occasion, they had thus strayed away, and the *peon* had ascended in search of them ; but it being too late to return by daylight, he con-

cluded to spend the night in the mountain. He, therefore, built a fire, and spread his *serape* before it, and slept till morning. On preparing for his return, he observed some shining metal among the ashes of the fire, and discovered he had been sleeping on an outcropping *lode* of native, or pure silver. To satisfy himself of this, however, he gathered up a portion of the mass from the ashes, and tying it in the corner of his *serape*, submitted it to one who was better qualified to judge of the metal. He immediately imparted the secret of this important discovery to another *peon*, a comrade of his, and the two privately loaded a couple of mules with the silver, and departed for the coast. On disposing of the cargoes, they returned with an *atajo* of mules; and, having redeemed themselves from their masters, commenced in earnest the transportation of this mass of native silver to the coast, and realizing large sums of money. At length, when this lump was exhausted, and a more difficult and intricate process was required for extracting the metal, these men had to call in superior knowledge, and more men to continue the work.

After being encamped for several months, during the hottest season of the year, in the lower country, drinking the brackish water of the plain, or that of the Rio Grande and San Juan, impregnated with

deleterious salines, we found the transition to the higher region of Cerralvo extremely agreeable and invigorating. We had exchanged the hot winds blowing over the malarious marshes of the coast, for the pure, health-giving breezes of the mountain range.

The sick, who were mostly suffering from chronic dysentery and diarrhœas, induced by the waters and the climate, together with the salt, and, in many instances, damaged, and at the best, badly-prepared rations,—experienced, in a peculiar degree, the benefit of the change. Forms of disease, which before baffled the skill of the medical officers, now readily yielded to the simplest remedies. It is true that we lost a number of good men at this post, from the diseases they had brought with them; but I do not remember a single case of disease, where the subject was in good health on arriving here.

Here, for the first time, for many months, our eyes were gladdened with the sight of pure running water. No one, unless he has been, like us, for a long time deprived of the blessing of the pure element, can imagine the delight experienced on coming suddenly in view of a cascade of transparent water, rushing pure from the bosom of the mountains,

“Sparkling and bright, as in Eden’s light.”

There is no music, either of art or nature, half so sweet to the ear of the wearied, march-worn, and thirsty soldier, as its mellow voice, singing over the polished stones and beneath the cooling shadows of evergreen trees. We approached the town ere we were aware of it, and on emerging from a wood came suddenly upon it; and the first object that attracted our attention, was the bright gleaming of a tiny waterfall,—a perfect Niagara in miniature. A shout of “Water! water!” passed from front to rear along the road, as the men rushed to the stream, and once more imbibed large and cooling draughts of the delicious beverage.

The two companies of the “Mississippi Rifles,” left to garrison the place, were made up mostly of young men,—planters, and sons of planters,—and almost all men of education and respectability. Many of the privates even, as well as the officers, were accompanied with servants, brought with them from home.

Our commissary was a little “West Pointer,” who, as is common with men of his class, while yet their honors are fresh upon them, had a most contemptible prejudice against all volunteers.

This prejudice he always carried about with him, and, whenever an opportunity presented, it was sure to express itself. Naturally of an unaccommodating

disposition, he felt no inclination to render any extra favor to these men. He, therefore, soon found himself the subject of a most unenviable unpopularity.

Now, it happened that the lieutenant, in accordance with instructions, had purchased of the citizens a quantity of Indian corn, which was stored in the building he occupied as his quarters. There were also among the army stores a large number of hand-mills. The Mississippians seeing these, were reminded of the "corn-dodgers" they had left at home; and, being tired of hard bread and musty flour, wished for a change of diet. As a very great favor, they respectfully begged of the lieutenant the loan of one of these mills, and a small quantity of the corn to grind. This favor was ungraciously denied them. They then had recourse to their officers, and, through Captain Sharp, again preferred the request. The captain was informed that "the mills were intended for the use of the *regular troops* at Monterey, and he was not authorized to give them out to volunteers. The men were welcome to the corn," he said, "but the mills they could not have."

In this state of affairs the men applied to me, knowing that I ranked "the little West-Pointer." I advised them to say nothing more to the commis-

sary about the mills, but to help themselves to them; and, after using them properly, to replace them in the same order they were found.

On the afternoon of the same day that I had given this advice, I happened to have some business with the lieutenant, and, on calling upon him, I found him pacing up and down his narrow apartment, in a most furious, but impotent rage. At the same time my ears were saluted with a loud roaring sound, that reminded me of the Falls of Niagara, and which was issuing from the court; the sound was accompanied with the full chorus of a "*corn song*," such as I had often heard among the negroes of the southern plantations.

I immediately perceived what was going on. With difficulty restraining an inclination to laughter, I inquired of the lieutenant the cause of his excitement.

"Oh!" cried he, pointing to the court, "those blackguard volunteers!"

The "blackguards," it seemed, were not content with the use of a few of the mills, but were determined, as they said, to give the lieutenant "a benefit," and had manned every mill they could muster, and were grinding and roaring away after the most approved plantation style.

It is unnecessary to say that, after this, whenever

they had any little favor to ask of the commissary, it was generally granted.

The following incident, which occurred while I was stationed at this place, I will relate, as illustrative of a peculiar trait of Mexican character—a recklessness in taking human life, and the indifference, amounting to stoicism, with which they meet death,—no matter how appalling to others the manner may be.

One morning, while going the rounds of my patients, I received a message from Captain Dellay, requesting my attendance at the camp of the Mississippians, to examine the body of one of his men, found murdered in the town. The body was found by a woman, hanging from an orange tree in her garden, with a hair lasso about the neck. I found the body lying in front of the tent the man, whilst living, had occupied. The rope was still attached to the neck, and the assassin had resorted to no other means than strangulation, to accomplish his purpose. We repaired to the place where the woman had discovered the body, and, on examination, found that the man had been lassoed at an unoccupied house, whence he was dragged a number of rods to the garden, and had been suspended to the tree.

While the investigation was going on, the people

of the place gathered around us, evincing a great interest in the matter, and offered their assistance in detecting the murderer. One present declared that he recognized the lasso as the property of Juan La Vaca. Others then asserted, that the deceased had been seen gambling the day previous with La Vaca, and had won several dollárs from him ; that the latter had been heard to threaten, that if he could not recover the amount at cards, he would take it from the dead body of the *maldito Americano*.

This Juan La Vaca was an outlawed robber, and a most notorious thief, who, during the possession of the town by us, had ventured to present himself amongst the citizens occasionally, without fear of arrest by the alcalde, whose functions as a magistrate had been partially suspended.

From all the circumstances and testimony we could gather, no doubt remained that this fellow was guilty of the murder ; and search was immediately instituted through the town for him. But he had left, not having been seen since early in the morning. It appeared that he had stolen a horse from a friend, at whose house he had been entertained, and escaped.

The excitement, in the mean time, became great amongst the citizens, who were loud in their expressions of horror at the deed. All were ready to

give testimony against La Vaca, as a worthless vagabond, and a heartless cut-throat, for whom hanging was far too good.

At length, after a few days, a reward having been promised for the murderer, La Vaca was captured, and brought in by a party of his own countrymen.

He was a villainous-looking scoundrel, and the very one, of all others, that a physiognomist would have selected as an assassin for a cheap bribe. The fellow was delivered to the comrades of the murdered man,—who, that his examination might be conducted with all due propriety, and without offending the sense of justice entertained by the citizens, brought him before the alcalde for trial. The Mexican, however, waiving all the formalities of a legal investigation, confessed the crime;—avowing that he had taken the life of the soldier, to recover the amount of five dollars, the latter had won from him at the gambling table.

The Mississippians now returned to their quarters, with the prisoner in charge, who was confined in the stocks, to await his execution.

I called upon him, and found him enjoying his *cigarito* with perfect gusto. His poor old mother stood by his side; she was faithful to him to the last; for the mother will cling with affection to her child, no matter how deeply steeped in crime and

infamy he may be. It was many months since they had met before. He had been an ungrateful and cruel son, having neglected his aged parent, and left her a mendicant in the streets, while he had been leading a life of reckless dissipation and crime.

As I entered the court, he was in conversation with his mother, who had visited him with food.

“Old woman,” said he, “why don’t you go to the *Americanos*, and buy me off? The tears of a whining old woman might move them to let me go.”

“O! Juan!” cried the poor woman,—“I have no heart to ask any favor for you,—for I know you murdered the *pobre Americano*. You are a bad, wicked man, and have no right to hope for pity from his friends. You must die; your broken-hearted mother cannot save you.”

“*Está buena!*” (all right!) returned the hardened brigand; and, turning his head from his weeping mother, commenced whistling “La Cachucha;”—when perceiving me standing near him, he stopped, and carelessly remarked:

“Señor, the old woman tells me that your people are going to choke me to death.”

“Do you think you deserve it?” said I.

“*Quien sabe!*” he replied, with a shrug of the shoulder, which expresses so much with the Spanish

race, and is an invariable answer to any question which they do not wish to meet candidly,—“*quien sabe!*”

“But did you not take the life of the American?”

“*Quien sabe!*”

“Have you not confessed the fact?”

“*Sí!* I said as much.”

I then informed him that he would be hanged with his own lariat,—the same with which he had lassoed the American, and on the same tree to which he had suspended his victim; and that in less than two hours.

I watched the face of the Mexican closely while acquainting him with his doom. Not a sign of fear, or surprise even, indicated itself in his features; but, with a contemptuous smile, he extended his hand, and begged the favor of a cigar. I gave him one; and, drawing his flint and steel from his pocket, he proceeded deliberately to light it, without the tremor of a muscle.

After inhaling a few whiffs of the fragrant smoke, he motioned me to him, and, putting his lips to my ear, whispered:

“*Quanto amarillo queries para mi cabeza?*”*

* “How much gold do you want for my life?”

This same question had been put to the alcalde on his examination.

I answered, that whatever might be the custom with his countrymen, the Americans would listen to no terms of compromise for so heinous a crime as murder; and he had nothing to look for, but death.

"*Está buena!*" was his reply, as he threw himself back with his elbow on the ground, while his hand supported his head, and was soon lost in the full enjoyment of his cigar.

Soon after a padre entered, and was left alone with the prisoner, only a single sentinel remaining in sight, to prevent any attempt, on his part, to escape.

La Vaca made confession to the priest, to whom he was observed to pass a small package from his pocket. Absolution was granted to him, and the usual Catholic mummary was gone through with, when the padre withdrew.

The prisoner was now released from the stocks, and, with the lasso around his neck, was led into the town, and to the garden where the murdered man was found. He walked with a firm step, smiling to the acquaintances he chanced to meet, and addressing to each some ribald or obscene remark.

On arriving at the orange-tree, he took hold of the limb, over which the end of the rope was thrown, and bearing his weight upon it, to test its strength, measured its distance from the ground, to ascertain if there was sufficient space for the length of his body. Being, apparently, satisfied with this survey, he now turned to the crowd and asked for a *cigarito*. This being handed him, he lighted it with his own flint and steel; and then turning to the Mississippians who held on to the end of the rope, coolly demanded "what they were waiting for?"

The lariat was immediately stretched upon;—the body was slowly drawn up, till the back of the neck came in contact with the limb of the tree,—when, struggling for a moment, with the burning *cigarito* still adhering to the swollen and bloody lips of the murderer,—he was left, till such time as his countrymen might choose to remove the body for burial.

This act of justice was no sooner consummated, than the bells of the churches tolled out a doleful peal for the departed soul. During the whole of that day the tolling continued; and now, those of the murderer's countrymen who had been the loudest in his condemnation, were filled with horror at the *unwarrantable* execution. Women tore their

hair, and exclaimed, "*Pobrecito! pobrecito!*" (Poor fellow! poor fellow!). The citizens assembled in little knots about the corners of the streets, and deprecated the injustice of *los Americanos!* The entire town went into mourning, and masses were said for the repose of the soul of the assassin, for more than a week.

The secret of all this was, that the gold that La Vaca had hoped would have purchased his life, had gone into the pockets of the priest.

This brutal stoicism, with which the lower class of Mexicans meet death, can be attributed only to the implicit confidence they are taught to repose in the forms of the Catholic religion. They are absolved by the priest from all and every taint of guilt, and are ready to enter the kingdom of heaven with all the sinless purity of childhood.

I have seen people of this class die under various circumstances,—on the battle-field, the sick-couch, and the gallows;—and invariably with the same reckless, mocking indifference.

While I remained at this place, an epidemic prevailed amongst the children, and visited every family. The disease was of a malarious origin, and was strictly confined to the younger children. It rarely attacked those of twelve years and upwards; whilst adults were entirely exempt from the disease.

It was of a dysenteric character, and readily yielded to quinine, so long as the very limited quantity of that medicine, with which I had been supplied, held out; but that failing, and having no substitute, I was pained to see them dying around me hourly.

The priests asserted that the disease was caused by the presence of the heretical Americans; and many of the common people believed this ridiculous assertion.

This priestly lie was of the same character as that they propagated on our first arrival in the country:—"That the *Americanos del Norte* were a blood-thirsty race,—more barbarous than the Comanche Indians,—that they gave no quarter in battle, and devoured all their enemies who haplessly fell into their hands." They also gave us credit for a variety of other interesting animal propensities. It is but justice, however, to the better-informed of the Mexicans, to say that these priestly inventions had no more weight than they deserved.

I devoted as much time as I could spare from my own sick, to visiting and prescribing for the little sufferers; and I have no doubt but that I am still held in grateful remembrance by some of the good citizens of the town.

Almost every hour of the day, the lively notes of the violin and clarionet, and the popping of hand-

rockets, gave notice of the passing procession, bearing some flower-bedecked little corpse to its last cold resting-place in the *campo santo*.

The custom of the burial of children among the Mexicans is one, among many others, derived from their Indian ancestors; and is certainly more pleasing and appropriate than the lugubrious and black-draped funeral processions of their Anglo-Saxon neighbors. The child ceases not to live,—it has only *gone home*. A Mexican mother once said to me, that she had five children.

“But,” said I, “where are the other three? I have never seen but these two little ones in your family.”

“O!” exclaimed she, while a warm, sunny smile lighted up her face, and an unshed tear glistened in her dark lashes, “O! I am still the mother of five darling babies. ’Tis true you see but *two here*,—the *other three*,” pointing upwards, with a look full of hope and loving confidence, “are *yonder*.”

With them, the death of a child is not considered a grievous dispensation, but rather a cause for rejoicing. It has escaped from an evil world, ere yet the blight of sin had stained its angel soul. At its burial, no sad and silent procession moves mournfully along, with slow and measured steps,—but a gay and joyous throng pass lightly through the streets,

•

to the sound of lively music, the voice of songs, the fun-provoking popping and whizzing of rockets, and the joyous ringing forth of bells.

The little corpse, dressed in its holiday robes, and bedecked with garlands, and bright-hued flowers, the last contributions of its friends, is laid upon a kind of salver, and carried along on the head of some near relative, who occasionally brings it down on a level with his hips, that the passers-by, and the groups in the doors and windows, may be favored with the sight of the little sleeper's pallid face, nestled amidst the flowers.

On reaching the *campo santo*, however, the poetry of the thing is at an end. The body of the child is hastily stripped of its adornments,—the flowers are distributed among the friends, as *memento mori*,—and naked as it first came into existence, so is it returned again to its mother dust.

On being called to visit a sick child, the first question asked by the mother, after making your prescription, is—

“*Señor Medico, que santo debe suplicamos?*”*

To one unfamiliar with the customs and superstitions of the country, this simple question would appear an incomprehensible one. But let him do

* What saint shall we supplicate?

as I did, when it was first propounded to me, and give the name of any saint that happens to occur to his mind,—San José, San Juan, San Pedro,—or, if need be, let him invent a saint for the occasion ;—and then, on making his next visit, he will find a solution to the enigma. The saint he has named has been adopted *pro. tem.*, as the special patron and guardian of the little patient. A picture or image of his saintship is forthwith installed at the head of the bed, and for the time all honors are paid to it. Neither medicine nor food is administered to the patient, without first propitiating this tutelary guardian.

Promises of gifts are made to it, in the event of the recovery of the child ;—and not unusually is it the case, that not only all the fees, but all the credit that of right belong to the watchful and benevolent *medico*, are given to this senseless object of Catholic idolatry.

CHAPTER V.

The Battle of Monterey.—Surgeon Chamberlain's Letter.—The First Day.—Captain Ramsay's Shot.—Captain McKavett's Presentiment and Death.—Colonel Garland's Attack.—Colonel Mitchell wounded.—General Butler leaves the Field, wounded.—Anecdote of the Soldier Myers.—An Incident.—Discretion the better part of Valor.—Ordered to Camp.—Dreadful Sights of a Battle-field.—Second Day.—Message from General Worth.—Worth's Strategy, and taking of the Bishop's Palace.—Approach to the North of the City.—The Texas Rangers and Señor Gabar.—Throwing of Shells into the Plaza.—Ampudia's Proposal rejected by General Taylor.—Other and Better Terms.—Strength of the City.—Worth deserves the Laurels.

THE battle of Monterey has been so often described, and is so familiar to the reader, that I deem it unnecessary to repeat it in this work. But I cannot forbear to give the following extract from a letter written a few days after the action, while the glow and the enthusiasm of the victory were yet fresh, and the writer was surrounded by the sad results of the battle, as well as by the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." The letter was written by Dr. E. K. Chamberlain—one of the most estimable and skillful surgeons of the army—to his

friend and relative, S. C. West, Esq., of Milwaukee, by whose kindness I am permitted the use of it in these pages :

“MONTEREY, Sept. 28, 1846.

* * * * *

“We have had bloody fighting,—Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma were mere child’s play compared to it:—so say our officers, who took part in those actions.

“The particulars, ere you receive this, you will, no doubt, have seen published, and I have no time now to enter into detail. Yesterday I gave Major Johnson a copy of my morning report of the killed and wounded of our regiment, which, I presume, he has sent to your papers for publication. We arrived here on Saturday, the 19th, and were saluted by some tremendous cannonading from their strongest fort, the moment we reached within striking distance. But no one was injured that day. That day, as well as the 20th (Sunday), was spent in reconnoitering their positions;—their artillery playing upon our men, whenever they could see them in shooting distance. No one killed or wounded on this day, as yet reported,—though the Texas Rangers were very venturesome, and, advancing within the range of their hottest fire, picked out, from under their forts and barricades, many prisoners. All

was anxiety and doubt in camp. No one knew, save the old General, and his advisers, the mode of attack, yet all were satisfied that something would be done on the morrow,—the 21st, and all were anxious for the ‘ball to open.’

“On the night of the 20th, General Worth,—or *Colonel* Worth—though he should be commander-in-chief, marched his division off quietly;—for what purpose, but few knew at the time. That night the enemy did not disturb us. In the morning our whole division was ordered under arms, leaving one company of each regiment to protect the camp. The object, as it was then stated, was not to fight, but merely to show ourselves, and make a demonstration of our force to the enemy, for the purpose of drawing his attention from General Worth, who, it appeared, was advancing to attack and carry some three or four heavy and strong fortifications on the mountains on the right and rear of the town.

“Though these positions appeared impregnable to mortal men, every officer in the regular forces seemed confident that Worth would succeed;—and yet they could give no other reason why,—than that he was the very man, of all others, for such a difficult and daring project.

“About 8 o’clock in the morning, our division, to which was attached Webster’s battery of two twen-

ty-four pound howitzers, and a large mortar,* with General Twiggs' division, including Bragg's light artillery, and Ridgley's† flying artillery,—marched out of camp together, for the purpose of showing ourselves to the enemy, and drawing their fire.

“The mortar was planted at a distance where it was supposed their largest fort would be annoyed by her heavy shells ;—and our two divisions were drawn up in line of battle, parallel with the greatest length of the town.‡

* Capt. Ramsay's.

† This promising young officer was killed, a few days afterward, at Monterey, by a fall of his horse on the slippery pavement of the smaller plaza.

‡ While reconnoitering the city from this point with a spy-glass, Captain Ramsay observed a small window (about three feet square), in the main tower of the cathedral, was occupied by a general officer, who, with a glass to his eye, was also taking a survey of the field in front. The distance from the battery to the cathedral was afterwards ascertained to be over three miles. Captain Ramsay, observing that the little window, which exposed the upper portion of the Mexican officer's person, presented a nice target, could not withstand the temptation of trying his skill at gunnery upon it. Accordingly, stepping over to Webster's battery, he brought one of the howitzers to bear upon it. The piece was directed with the accuracy of a rifle, and the shot—a twenty-four pounder—struck within a foot of the Mexican officer's breast. It was none other than General Ampudia himself, who quickly retreated from his dangerous look-out. Nothing would have induced him to expose himself there again during the day. The scar made by the shot in the solid masonry of the wall, will remain as long as that massive tower shall endure,—as an evidence of the skill and perfection of American gunnery.

S. C. S.

“Here we stood for an hour or two ;—the enemy pouring into us from his twelve and eighteen-pounders,—and we returning it with the mortar only. Whilst in this position, our men were burning with anxiety and uneasiness to be at close quarters. At length, a distant gun on the right, followed by others in equal succession, told us that Worth had gained his position in the night, and had now commenced the attack.*

“Now to our commander seemed the time to do

* Captain McKavett, of the 8th infantry, a brave, amiable, and much esteemed gentleman, was the first officer who fell at this point.

For a number of days he had had a presentiment of his death. While at Cerralvo, being too sick to be on duty, I found him confined to his couch in his tent. He was suffering with a severe attack of camp dysentery. I endeavored to dissuade him from attempting to join the advance of his column on the morrow, and to put himself under medical treatment. I have no doubt he would have done so, if the prospect of a battle had not been so imminent. But, with a melancholy smile, said he, “I *must* proceed to Monterey ; I feel an irresistible impulse urging me onward,—an impulse which I would not overcome. I know I shall be the first officer to fall before the town, and I would not shrink from my destiny. I thank you for your friendly interest,” continued he, “but I cannot remain.”

I accounted for his melancholy foreboding as the effect of his disease, and so explained to him. “No !” said he,—“I have long had the impression, and nothing can change my mind.”

On leaving him, he bade me farewell, with the assurance that it for the last time in this world.

Poor fellow! his presentiments were but too true. A nine-pound shot struck him in the breast while he was leading on his company, killing him instantly.

S. C. S.

something. To Colonel Garland, a chivalrous and daring, though very imprudent officer, commanding the 3d infantry, he said :—

“ ‘If you think you can carry that fort, on the extreme left of the town, you may make the attempt.’

“ ‘*I’ll take it,*’ replied the colonel; and at it he went with his whole command. But to get to it, he was obliged to advance the distance of a mile and a half, through a double and treble cross-fire from six or eight different forts.

“ These batteries all opened upon him with grape and canister, doing great slaughter.

“ The fourth regiment, with the Baltimore battalion, followed to sustain him, and met with the same reception. Seeing this, the general ordered the Ohio, Tennessee, and Mississippi regiments of our division to follow,—leaving the Kentucky regiment to protect the mortar. Off they started, in double-quick time, through the same track, and under the same plunging cross-fires from the batteries.

“ The fort was carried by the first charge, and the conquest pushed on to another. In the attack upon this last, our men suffered greatly, and fell off into the streets of the town.

“ Here they were no better off,—the streets being barricaded; and at each corner they met masked

batteries, pouring a deadly fire into their ranks, from which they could find no shelter.

“ Here Colonel Mitchell, of the first Ohioans, fell wounded ; and all was confusion, from the fact that no one knew what was next to be done, nor how to do it. At this time, General Taylor, General Butler, and General Hamer were all with the Ohio regiment, alternately giving orders for marching and countermarching,—producing great confusion among our officers, as well as among the men ;—and all this time, the galling fire of the masked batteries was decimating our numbers.

“ At one time they got a secure position under a high stone wall, and were slaying the enemy in great numbers,—when an order came for them to countermarch on the plain, to protect Bragg’s battery, which had taken a position there, and was threatened with an attack from the lancers. To execute this movement, they were obliged to repass the cross-fire, where they had before suffered so severely. The command, however, was promptly and speedily executed,—Lieut. Col. Weller now in command of the regiment ;—and the promptness of the manœuvre saved the battery from capture,—as the lancers, in great force, charged upon them,—but were repulsed by the first volley ;—a large number of saddles being emptied, and many horses shot down.

“At this time, I was operating upon a poor fellow, whose foot was shot off by a cannon-ball; and in a place where the twelve and eighteen-pounders were tearing the ground, and the chaparral all about us. In this place I performed two amputations, and extracted several balls, when General Butler passed me, wounded in the leg, retiring to camp.

“I examined his wound, and found it only a musket-ball through the leg. The bone was uninjured, and no hemorrhage. He said he would go on to camp, and get a hospital steward to dress it.

“I started for my regiment, when I met in the chaparral, Doctors Craig, Madison, Jarvis, and Smith,* operating and dressing wounds.

“Here I found one of my regiment, with a grape-shot in his throat; the ball having entered the centre of the lower jaw-bone, which it had fractured and shattered horribly. Still the brave fellow had walked from town unassisted,† and said he had discharged his piece three times, in the distance, and had killed three Mexicans after he received the wound. This man is still living, and I think he will recover. His name is Myers, and belongs to the ‘Invincible Riflemen,’ Captain Ramsay’s company.

“While here, some wagons came to take our

* Dr. W. R. Smith, of Texas.

† Some two or three miles.

wounded to camp; and as we were in the act of loading a poor fellow into one of them, an eighteen pound shot from a fort in the town passed directly through the wagon, tearing the box and cover to shatters, and started the five mules on a run,—these started the other two teams, and we were thus deprived of our wagons; and our poor fellows had to be carried by hand. The covered tops of the wagons had attracted the attention of the enemy, and they had turned their guns upon us. We, believing that discretion was the better part of valor, in this instance, retired to a safer distance, where we resumed our work of mutilation.

“About this time a messenger came from camp, saying a great number of wounded had been brought from the field, by another route,—and there was no surgeon to attend to them. I was, therefore, ordered into camp, and performed eight amputations, as fast as I could get along, with Doctor George, my only assistant. My work of extracting, and excising balls, securing blood-vessels, and dressing contused wounds, continued during the livelong night, and recommenced with the return of day.

“I have amputated for the Tennessee,* the Missis-

* Major Alexander, of the Tennessee regiment, was wounded in the hip, while exposed with his regiment to the galling cross-fire of the masked batteries. He was indebted for his life to the fortunate

sippi, and my own regiment, and three regulars,—besides, there are a number of limbs, that, in all probability, must yet come off. It seems all blood,—blood,—blood!—and I am heartily sick of it. Oh! what a dreadful sight is a battle-field—particularly one where death is produced by artillery and the bursting of shells.

“But few of the dead were buried until Thursday, 24th,—when they could with difficulty be recognized.

“I commenced a history of the fight, but have only got to what may be called the operations of the first day. Though a *fort** was gained, and many lives lost, the only great advantage was in diverting the attention of the enemy from General Worth, who was successful, and capturing fort after fort on the right;—yet Taylor was determined to hold on to it.

“From its proximity to other larger forts, which were constantly pouring their fire into it, and its difficulty of access, it was hazardous business to remain there, and more hazardous still for one regi-

circumstance of being in possession of a purse well filled with gold. This he carried in the right pocket of his pantaloons. A grape-shot, partially spent, struck in the direction of the groin, but, coming in contact with the gold,—glanced off,—making only a flesh wound. The major considers this the best “cash investment” he ever made.

S. C. S.

* Fort Taneria.

ment to relieve another in garrisoning it,—many being killed and wounded in passing to and from this fort.

“On the morning of the 22d, a messenger came from General Worth, stating, that he had met the enemy on the plain beyond the fortifications, the day before, and had defeated them, without any serious loss to his own force;—and that he had stormed, and taken at the point of the bayonet the highest* fortifications, and would have the Bishop's Castle—a strong fortress,—before night.

“This was joyful news to our tired and wounded boys, for they had every confidence in his valor.

“Worth also advised us to rest, saying: ‘The day to storm stone walls had gone by;—the city could be taken without such useless sacrifice of human life;’—and the result has shown it. He took the Bishop's Palace,—and so neatly, and speedily, that I doubt if the men themselves knew how it was done.

“He sent out from the hill above it, two regiments of flankers secreted, and from his centre, with a small force, made a feint to storm the palace. This party, on being fired upon, retreated in confusion—

* The forts of La Federacion, El Soledad and La Independencia, on the further side of the Saltillo road, and opposite the Bishop's Palace.

the sally-ports were opened, and out poured hundreds and thousands of eager Mexicans to make an easy conquest of them. They pursued in confusion, until they came between the two flanking squads of infantry, when the latter closed in upon them, and pouring in from either hand their deadly volleys of musketry, charged upon them at double quick time. The poor frightened devils, who were not killed at the charge, commenced a hasty and confused retreat for the palace,—our boys at their heels;—into the fort they all rushed together, and in five minutes the black flag was torn down, the glorious stripes and stars proudly unfolded ‘the red, white and blue’ upon the breeze, and the guns on the ramparts turned upon the flying Mexicans and their devoted city.

“This was all visible from our side of the town, and is considered one of the most brilliant strategies in the annals of military warfare. The beauty of it is, Worth effected it, *without the loss of a single man.*

“Wednesday morning, came another messenger from General Worth to General Taylor, stating that he should attack the west end of the town at 12 o’clock M. The hour arrived, and at it he went. Under the cover of the heavy guns from the palace, he moved down the hill with a large force of infan-

try and Duncan's battery. From his position on the mountain above, he had observed that the streets were enfiladed, and barricaded with walls, ditches, etc., that *each house was of itself a fortification*, and that it would not do to risk his men in the street, till he had the command of these. He therefore ran rapidly down under the walls of the houses, and commenced digging his way through them, and avoiding the streets. The men dug or knocked holes through the adobe, or stone walls of the houses, and out on the other side; placing the infantry on the tops of them, to protect those at work below; and thus proceeded from street to street under cover of the houses. By five o'clock, Worth had worked his way into the heart of the city, and had got possession of nearly one-half of the place.

"Whilst this was going on, the Texas Rangers dismounted, and entered from the fort at the lower end of the town,* and commenced the work of

* Most of the citizens, fearing that, in the event of the city falling into the hands of the Americans, it would be given up to the plunder of the soldiery, had removed with their valuables to a safe distance among the ranchos,—the wealthy retiring to their haciendas. Some few, however, who were better informed as to the character of the Americans, determined to remain in their houses. Among these was an intelligent and accomplished Spanish gentleman, Señor Gahar, who gave me a very amusing account of the entrance of the Texas Rangers. He occupied a palatial residence on the principal

sharp-shooting from one house-top to another, killing every Mexican as they would a squirrel.

“Another party of Worth’s force came around for the big mortar, and about six o’clock had it planted on the hill back of the town, where they could drop the shells into the Grand Plaza.

“Webster had succeeded in getting his twenty-four pound howitzer into the lower fort, and trained upon the same point—where the greatest strength of the Mexicans was now assembled. First came a

street,—that leading down from the height of the Bishop’s Castle,—the street, on one side of which, our people had to dig their way; and wishing to propitiate the good-will of the assailants, had prepared a most sumptuous collation, which was arranged with much taste, on a table extending the whole length of his ample court. An awning was stretched over the table, on which was arranged the señor’s entire stock of plate.

As the Rangers came up the street, he placed himself at the entrance, and awaited their approach.

“As they came near,” said he, “my heart almost failed me; for the Texians, with their coarse hickory shirts, and trowsers confined by a leathern strap to their hips, their slouched hats, and their sweat and powder-begrimed faces, certainly presented a most brigandish appearance!

“They came along, yelling like Indians, and discharging their rifles at the Mexicans on the house-tops, a few of whom still continued to fire upon them, as they passed along the street.

As they came in front of the señor’s residence, he met them with a courteous salutation, and invited them to partake of some refreshment. The large folding-doors of the entrance were thrown open, and presented to the eyes of the hungry fellows, the tempting array which had been prepared for them.

shell from the mortar, whizzing and whirring over the heads of the crowd, next came another shell from the howitzer, containing 240 musket balls, and the two exploded at the proper moment, shedding death and dismay over the whole square! Bang!—goes another shell from the mortar,—then another from the howitzer,—and the fandango closed for the night, as it was getting too dark to direct the guns with accuracy.

“At daylight, on Thursday morning, an officer,

“Hello! the old fellow speaks English!” exclaimed an astonished Ranger.

“Look there, boys!” cried another,—“*there’s* a sight good for an empty stomach!”

“I reckon them’s the halls of Montezuma!” observed another.

“Walk in!—walk in, gentlemen!” says the señor; “help yourselves; my house and all it contains is at your service!”

They did not require a second invitation, but rushed in, but with the utmost decorum, as my friend declared, partook of his excellent feast.

“Look here, old fellow!” cried a Texian, to whom he was passing a bottle of claret, “you’re not a ‘greaser!’ You must be a *white man* and no mistake!”

He was good-naturedly informed that the señor had that honor, besides being a native of old Spain.

“Well, I reckoned you warn’t a Mexican,” was the rejoinder; “and you may always count on the friendship of the Texas boys.”

“For three or four days,” said Señor Gahar, “I continued to keep my house open. All were welcomed, and supplied with food and wine; but during the whole time, I did not lose so much as a spoon, of the valuable amount of plate which had been all the time exposed upon my tables.”

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with a white flag, came into town,—proposing a capitulation to save life. His proposition to General Taylor was, that they would surrender the town, provided they might be permitted to retire with the honors, and all the munitions of war.

“ ‘No, sir,’ said old R. R.,—‘Unconditional surrender of everything, and everybody,—are my only terms!’

“The officer retired, saying he would report the answer to General Ampudia, and if he did not accede, they would fire a shell from the ‘Black Fort’ at twelve o’clock.

“That hour arrived, and with it another flag proposing better terms, which were acceded to. The Mexican troops were all to retire on parol, with their small arms,—leaving all the public property, artillery, etc.

“We have now the forts,—in which, and in the town,—nearly all the regulars are quartered.

“This town is, probably, the strongest position to conquer, on the continent.

“It has before been besieged by powerful forces, but was never before taken. Nor could it have been taken now, by any other man than General Worth. So say all the officers, who are not envious of his success. General Taylor could never have taken it, with this force.

“Worth has won all the laurels at this siege, and he deserves them. In the United States, and in the official reports, however, General Taylor will get all the glory.”

CHAPTER VI.

Description of the Camp near Monterey.—Trade opened with the Rancheros.—Relations between the People and the Soldiers.—Mexican Señoritas.—Fandangoes.—An Evening Ride.—Arrival.—Fandango Music.—Addition to Party of Rangers.—José Maria Luna.—His Friendly Services.—Saves the Life of the Author.—Timely Warning.—El Mocho.—An Incident of Blood, related by Doña Serafina.—Attempts to take the Guerrilla Chief.—Captain Baylor's Affair at Manteca.—Young Gideon Lee saves the Company.—Dilemma.—Resolution to Stand our Ground.—José Maria is Dispatched to the Camp.—The Fandango is Broken up.—Entrance of Guerrillas.—White Flag.—Its Reception, and Final Answer.—The Texians good Shots.—The *Jacales*.—Daylight appears.—McCulloch's Boys.—Catching a Tartar.—Return to Camp with Prisoners and Horses.—Scene in Rangers' Camp.—Division of the Spoil.

THE spot the General had selected, on which to erect his city of tents, was the most desirable to be found on this portion of our line. It lay about a league and a-half from Monterey, and commanded its principal approach.

It was an extensive park of magnificent live-oaks, mingled with a great variety of other trees, many the peculiar growth of this particular locality.

In the centre of this delightful grove there bubbled up, from a large basin, several large springs of the

coldest and purest crystal, from whence flowed as many joyous streamlets, conveying the grateful element to every part of the encampment. The deep shade of those oaks, which grew the most luxuriantly near these springs, and whose roots were covered with thick mosses, made this a favorite place of resort in the sultry hours of mid-day.

Here, stretched lazily beneath the arms of the venerable oaks, the unemployed soldiers loved to pass the time, in repeating the gossip of the camp, or dreaming of their far-off northern homes; some, perhaps, expressing their disgust at the dull life they were then leading, and longing again for—

“The cannon’s opening roar,”

and the renewal of the excitement of active warfare.

To this spot, also, would come the *rancheros*, who had learned that the *Americanos del norte* were not the cannibals their priests had at first taught them to believe; but were *buenos Cristianos* as well as themselves. Here would they assemble, and display their stock-in-trade, consisting usually of *carne seco* and *carne fresco*, *leche de cabro*, *chile con carne*,*

* *Chile con carne*—a popular Mexican dish—literally red pepper and meat.

tamales, frijoles, tortillas, pan de maiz, and other eatables, with *puros*, blankets, saddles, etc. These articles found ready purchasers among our men, often at most unreasonable prices; for soldiers, as well as sailors, spend their money freely. The *rancheros* found they had established a market with a set of customers, by no means to be despised. They were, in fact, becoming rich by their intercourse with our people;—and many who were thus filling their pockets with American coin, regretted the final withdrawal of our troops from the country.

We were on the best terms with the people of the surrounding villages, who, as another means of lightening our purses, would frequently get up *fundangoes*, and invite our men to join them. These invitations were rarely slighted; for, officers as well as privates readily availed themselves of the amusements they furnished.

All the *señoritas* of the neighboring *ranchos* would be assembled on these occasions to grace the party. Arrayed in their holiday dresses, they were very pretty. Their forms are models of womanly beauty, and their motions in the dance are free and graceful as the waving of forest boughs.

The Mexican girl, in the selection of colors and the materials of dress, as well as in the mechanical arrangement of them, displays a skill and taste as

refined as the most fastidious of our fashionable belles at home. This display of taste and this graceful bearing, are not the result of education or training, but are purely native and intuitive,—peculiarities resulting from the mixture of Castilian and Indian blood, warmed by the beams of her sunny climate; for,

“All that’s best of dark and bright,
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.

* * * * *

One ray the more, one hue the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
That flows adown her raven tress,
Or brightly lingers o’er her face.”

The matrons presided at the tables, and dispensed the good things which covered them, in the way of eatables and drinkables, and pocketed the change which was freely thrown into their laps.

Aguardiente, *pulque*, and *mescal** were the favorite

* *Aguardiente* is a kind of rum, distilled from the juice of the fermented sugar-cane. *Pulque* is the favorite drink of the lower classes in the central part of the table-land of Mexico. It is produced by fermenting the sap of the maguey, or American aloe (*Agave Americano* or *Mexicano*), which is cultivated in plantations for the purpose. This plant is of slow growth; but when full grown, its leaves attain a height of five to eight feet, and even more. It flowers, on an average, only once in ten years, and it is from the flower-stalk that the juice is extracted. In the plantations the peon watches each plant as the time of its flowering approaches, and just when the central shoot, or flower-stem is about to appear, he makes a deep cut, and

beverages of the *hombres*, while the weaker and harmless *vino dulce* was served to the *señoritas*.

It was late in the month of December, 1846, on a beautiful evening, as the sunshine was yet lingering on the eastern mountain-tops,—a small party of us left camp for our usual evening ride in the chaparral. We had ridden but a short distance, when we met a *ranchero*, bound to the camp, who informed us that, at the village of San Francisco, about two leagues distant, a *fandango*, in honor of their patron saint, was to come off that night. We

scoops out the whole heart or middle part of the stem, leaving nothing but the outside rind. This forms a natural basin, or well, about two feet in depth and one and a half in width. Into this well the sap, which was intended to feed the shoot, flows so rapidly that it is necessary to remove it twice, and sometimes three times a day. The sap, as it flows, has a very sweet taste, and none of that disagreeable smell which it afterwards acquires. It is called *aguamel*, or honey-water. It ferments spontaneously, and a small quantity of old fermented juice speedily induces fermentation in that which is newly drawn, as sour leaven does in new dough. It is usual, therefore, to set aside a portion of sap to ferment separately for ten or fifteen days, and to add a small quantity of this to each vessel of fresh juice. Fermentation is excited immediately, and in twenty-four hours it becomes *pulque* in the very best state for drinking. A good *maguay* yields from eight to fifteen pints a-day, and this supply continues during two and often three months.

The distillation of the fermented *pulque* produces the *mescal*, or *aguardiente de maguay*,—a fiery kind of brandy, which, if habitually indulged in, produces chronic inflammation of the lower bowels. Such, at least, was its effect upon our men.

accordingly determined to extend our ride to that place.

There had been a shower in the early part of the day, and the dust being laid, the road was in fine order for a short gallop. The dew was falling, and the acacia-trees, the principal growth of the chaparral, being in full flower, the air was redolent with their delicate and exhilarating aroma. Our horses were fresh, and, snuffing the fragrant breeze with dilated nostrils, required neither whip nor spur to urge them over the well-beaten road. Horse and rider were in fine spirits, and, after a rapid ride, we drew rein at the village, in the best of humor to enjoy all the fun in store for us.

We were received with many hearty and sincere welcomes by the kind villagers, and we readily made ourselves at home with them. Already had the dancing commenced. It was conducted in the open air, in the *plaza*, with which every Mexican village, however inconsiderable, is provided. The music consisted of a couple of discordant clarionets, a guitar, and a large bass drum. The latter sonorous instrument was belabored by a huge black fellow, who seemed to be especially assigned to that duty in virtue of the well-developed set of muscles he brought to bear upon it. The huge blows he dealt it, drowned the discord of the other instru-

ments, and caused his dark, but good-natured face to shine with big drops of perspiration. What was lacking in musical harmony, however, was more than compensated by the happy faces and cheerful laughter which prevailed.

Our own immediate party consisted of nine persons, including the servant of my friend, Lieutenant B. But, after a little while, we were joined by about a dozen Texas Rangers. These fellows were always wide awake for either a frolic or a fight, and were equally at home in either. They were held in great fear by the Mexicans, whose troops had often been roughly handled by them. In their border warfare, they had shown but little mercy, and rarely discriminated between Mexicans and Camanches.

For a while, therefore, the addition of the Rangers to our party, seemed to check the cheerfulness of the dance; but on the new comers good-naturedly declaring that they came only as friends,—all soon went on again, as if all present had always been sworn friends and comrades. Indeed, we forgot, while watching the happy señoritas, as they whirled away in the arms of their Ranger partners, that war had ever existed between our people and theirs.

Half the night had thus passed away in friendly intercourse, and we were upon the point of starting on our return to camp, when B.'s man, in whose

charge we had left our horses, sent word that he had heard some sounds of a suspicious character,—like the tramp of a body of horse, on the main road, leading into the village.

At the same moment, I felt a friendly hand laid upon my arm, and, on turning round to ascertain whose it was, recognized the face of a friendly Mexican, whom I had known for some time. This man had frequently come to the camp to solicit my professional services for his neighbors, and acted as my guide, in my visits among the ranchos.

José Maria Luna was the secretary of the alcalde of the district of San Francisco. I then had, and still have most grateful regard for this man; for on more than one occasion he had saved me from capture, and perhaps murder, by his friendly and timely warnings. At one time, when I had accompanied him to Santa Rosa, to visit a sick relative, the rancheros were alarmed by the approach of a body of guerrillas. José directed me to a place of concealment, and, to save my horse, which was tied in the rear of the house, he and his friends effectually hid him, by cutting green bushes, and piling them around him to the eaves of the house; thus saving him from the robbers, who had, it seems, entered the village in pursuit of me. After a hasty search, and supposing I had escaped with my horse. (as they

were told), they withdrew, to watch the main road for an approaching mule-train, on its way to Monterey.

I instantly detected by José's countenance that something was wrong, and followed him beyond the circle of dancers, as he led the way.

"Señor Medico," said he, "call together your friends and mount. There is trouble at hand! El Mocho, with a large force, has just halted outside the village, and will soon be down upon us. I can guide you, by a bridle-path, beyond the pueblo, on your way towards camp. Away! lose not a moment!"

El Mocho (the maimed), as he was called by his countrymen (from the loss of a hand), was a notorious chief of a guerrilla band. Before the commencement of the war, he had been a captain of banditti; but, offering his services, with his gang, had been accepted by his government, and enrolled as a guerrilla leader, with a lieutenant's commission.

Martinez, for that was his name, had long been the terror of the country. The unfortunate traders and travelers, who fell into his hands, were made to pay heavy contributions for black mail; and the peaceable rancheros were continually plundered, and frequently murdered by his cut-throats. He had also caused us much trouble, by intercepting

and killing our express-men, and waylaying our feebly escorted wagon-trains. Among his own countrymen, Martinez was notorious as a scoundrel of the blackest stamp ;—and as an illustration of his inhuman character, I will relate one, among a number of equally fiendish acts of this guerrilla. It was related to me by Doña Serafina, the wife of my friend, José Maria.

At the time of the advance of our army upon Monterey in September, a young lad of some twelve or fourteen years of age, probably a drummer-boy, or the son of a regular soldier, had lingered from weariness some distance in the rear of the rear-guard, and had been captured by guerrillas, who like hyenas hung upon our trail. The poor lad was assaulted by these worse than devils, and dreadfully wounded. After being stripped of his clothes, he was left by the roadside to perish alone. He lay in this condition till the next day ; when, reviving a little, he attempted to drag his mutilated body along the road, in the direction taken by his friends. In this situation the poor boy was discovered by the kind-hearted José, and conveyed to his home in San Francisco, where his wounds were dressed, and he was nursed with most tender care by his family. His abdomen had been laid open by a lance thrust, so that the bowels protruded, and

dragged from the wound. But in a few days, by skillful dressings, he had so far recovered as to bear removing from the house, on his couch, to the shade of a large fig-tree in the garden.

One day Doña Serafina had thus removed her little patient into the fresh air,—and some domestic cares had drawn her away to the stream which flowed in the rear of the house.

She had been absent about an hour; and on returning, her first care was to seek the sick boy; but he had disappeared,—and, though she sought for him in all directions, she could find nothing of him. The thought occurred that, perhaps, during her absence, some small party of Americans passing, had discovered him, and taken him with them to their camp

The next day, however, while watching from her door a party of guerrillas, as they passed through the village, *El Mocho* rode up to her, and, throwing a blood-stained handkerchief at her feet, ordered her with an oath to wash it, and have it in readiness for him, within an hour, when he would call for it.

“I immediately,” said Doña Serafina, “recognized the handkerchief as my own, that I had bound about the bowels of my poor child the morning before.”

“Oh, Martinez!” she cried, “what have you done? Tell me, where did you get this handkerchief?”

“You have murdered my *pobrecito Americano*!”

“What is that to you?” exclaimed the blood-thirsty villain,—as he turned to ride away,—but suddenly halting,—he turned towards her, and, with the laugh of a devil from hell, pointed to a neighboring chaparral, and bid her “seek *there* for the *maldito heretico*!”

“And there indeed,” said the affectionate-hearted woman, while tears interrupted the recital, “there I found the *pobrecito inocente*, with his throat cut from ear to ear, and his beautiful white limbs most horribly mutilated.”

General Taylor had desired to capture this blood-thirsty and troublesome guerrilla, and parties of Rangers had frequently been sent out in search of them. Sometimes they would return badly cut up; as was the case with Baylor’s Texians in his rencontre with Mocho, at the rancho of Manteca. Baylor was badly whipped, having several men killed and wounded, himself leading the van of the retreat from the rancho. He was said, by his men, to owe his own safety less to his courage and presence of mind, than to the fleetness of his horse. In fact, he

was too intent on his own escape, to think of that of his men, who, but for the bravery of young Lee*, his lieutenant, would have been cut to pieces.

Sometimes, weeks would be spent in a useless hunt for this guerrilla, who to-day would be in one place, and to-morrow leagues away.

He rarely moved with less than two or three hundred fighting men.

Our little party of twenty half-armed men would stand but a poor chance in an open fight with *El Mocho* and his followers. What should we do? We had but a moment to make our arrangements,—either to attempt a retreat, or to stand our ground. The chances were greatly against us either way. In retreating through the chaparral by a narrow bridle-path, we might easily be cut off;—no doubt, the wily leader had provided against such an attempt. He had, doubtless, been well informed of the number of our party, and, knowing many of us were officers, was desirous of making prisoners of us, with, perhaps, no very amiable intentions towards the Rangers.

The latter, who, by their frequent contests with guerrillas, were better acquainted with their habits

* Son of Hon. Gideon Lee, former Mayor of New York.

of fighting and attack, were unanimously in favor of standing our ground, and making the best fight we could.

It was instantly resolved to take possession of the strongest house on the plaza,—that near which we had gathered,—and fortify it as well as we might on so short a notice. The thought no sooner occurred, than it was acted upon,—and a number of the Texians immediately mounted upon the flat roof or *azotea*, while others, with their carbines, and whatever other implements came to hand, were at work, punching holes through the soft *adobes* of which the walls were built—through which to direct our guns. In the mean time our horses were brought into the house for security. José had brought mine to me, and again urged me to mount, and away,—insisting upon the assurance that he could safely guide me through to camp.

Upon the back of an old letter, I hastily penciled a few lines,—briefly describing our situation, and saying that we had no doubt we might hold our own, till relief should reach us; at the same time promising so to amuse the enemy, that our friends might approach the place and surround it, before their presence should be suspected. I also suggested that the affair might result in the capture of the notorious Mocho. This note I gave to the faith-

ful José, and begged him to mount, and neither to spare my horse nor himself, till he placed it in the hands of General Taylor himself. This he promised to do,—and how faithfully he kept his word, the sequel will show.

In the mean time, the confusion in the plaza had become general. The music was hushed,—the dancers were scattered in all directions ;—and by the time we had settled upon our plans,—the place so full of life and jollity, a moment before, became as quiet as the grave. The tables of the matrons were left, still covered with refreshments, and the torches still shed their flickering rays ;—but now upon a “festal scene deserted.” It was, however, but a few minutes that the plaza remained unoccupied. I had scarcely pressed the hand of the Mexican, and motioned him away, when the guerrillas came in sight. They had dismounted, and left their horses tethered in the thickets, where they had first halted,—and now entered the plaza on foot. A glance convinced them that we had prepared for their reception, and that it would not long be prudent to remain in range of the Texas rifles. Simultaneously they withdrew into the streets opening into the square, where, behind the protecting angles of the houses, they could more safely reconnoitre the building we were occupying. A short time elapsed,

when two of the guerrillas entered the plaza, in front of our position, bearing a white flag on the end of a lance-staff.

We were yet busily engaged making the necessary openings through the walls, and were willing to delay the attack till all our arrangements were completed. Stopping in front of our station,—the bearer of the flag hailed us, and demanded an unconditional surrender,—on compliance with which we were promised our lives, and the treatment of prisoners of war.

“We know your number is small,” said he, “and it will be useless for you to attempt to hold out against us. Your escape is impossible.”

“Return in fifteen minutes,” we replied, “and you shall have our answer.”

In this they acquiesced, and retired. This was all the time we required to complete our plans of defense;—and scarcely had the time elapsed,—when the flag returned and demanded the answer.

“There it is, you thieving cut-throat!” exclaimed a Ranger from the roof,—and, at the instant, the crash of a rifle was heard,—and the flag-bearer fell, with half an ounce of Texas lead in his brains.

To us below, this was an unexpected termination of the parley;—but as guerrillas had never yet respected the white flag, and the Texians were well

aware they never intended to give quarter where they had the advantage—or in this instance to keep terms with us,—they declared this was the only proper answer to return the cowardly rascals. Had they been any others than guerrillas, I should have doubted the policy, as well as honesty and humanity of this reception of their flag. But the Mexicans had set the example, on more than one occasion, of not recognizing the sanctity of the *bandera blanca*, not only with the Texians, but also with our own army. In this case I have no doubt our Texian comrade was right, and returned the only answer suited to the emergency.

We afterwards learned, they had (as they supposed) so effectually cut off our retreat, that it was impossible for any one to escape and bring relief;—and, if we took to cover, we would be easily routed by their overwhelming numbers. But deeming, as is characteristic of the Mexicans, that “the better part of valor is discretion,”—they hoped to bring us to terms without the risk of an attack.

They knew with whom they had to contend, and proposed terms, which they had no idea of observing.

We remembered the affair of Mier; and had resolved to fight to the last man, and, should it be necessary, share the fate of the little band of heroes

of the Alamo. Better thus, than to fall into the hands of these merciless wretches alive, and afterward to be murdered in cold blood. Besides, we knew if José had eluded them, and reached the camp, we would soon be joined by that prince of Rangers, Ben M'Culloch, and his brave boys,—when we would have the game in our own hands.

The fall of the flag was received with a savage yell of disapprobation, so loud and prolonged, as to give us some idea of the number of blood-thirsty throats that gave vent to it.

Simultaneously, a rush was made along the side of the square, but at the expense of a good number of the guerrillas,—who fell from the unerring fire of the Rangers stationed on the roof. The object of the rush, evidently, was to gain the houses in front. Those of us who were armed only with side-arms, had taken our station below, to be in readiness to repel any assault that might be attempted upon the doors and windows from the street. The houses in the rear of us were soon occupied,—as well as those on the opposite side of the plaza,—from whence they opened a scattering fire upon our roof and windows.

Their fire, however, was without effect, as the walls of our house were carried up about four feet above the level of the roof, forming a parapet, and

thus affording a good breastwork to our friends,—who were exposed only when they stood erect, or were in the act of taking sight along their carbines, at the assailants.

The windows were partially protected by oaken shutters, and we had further strengthened them by barricades of stones, torn from a partition wall within the house. The heavy oaken doors were bullet-proof. The Mexicans' badly-loaded *escopetas* sent the balls wide of the mark, while our carbines and rifles counted at every spring of the trigger, as a "greaser's" head chanced to show within range of them.

On each side of us, separated by a narrow alley, stood a *jacal*, or thatched roofed and reed-built house, the materials of which were of the most combustible nature. These we feared the black devils might be prompted to put fire to, and force us by the heat to abandon our shelter. In fact, we soon discovered such was their object. As the torches, which had served to light up the *fandango*, were not yet extinguished, they attempted to use them for that purpose,—but most signally failed in the attempt; for whoever essayed to approach them, were made to bite the dust. At length, seeing nothing could be accomplished in that quarter, the lights were permitted to burn on unmolested.

This was what we desired, as they lighted up the plaza for us, and showed us the enemy, whenever he ventured to expose himself in front.

Thus matters stood between us for some time; the Mexicans, no doubt, concluding to defer an assault upon our stronghold till daylight, when, perhaps, they might be able to bring other means to bear against us.

The morning mists began to show themselves upon the crest of the Camanche peak, and the advance messengers of day glimmered beyond the Sierra Madre. If relief was coming at all, it must be at hand. José was familiar with every inch of the ground, and must have long since arrived at the camp. He had been gone quite two and a half hours, and time enough had elapsed to bring our friends.

But, hark!—what do we hear? It is a sound like the cautious tread of approaching horsemen. The quick ears of the enemy, too, have heard it;—but, before they have time to evacuate the houses, and retreat to their horses, they find themselves surrounded by—*McCulloch's Boys*.

“The Rangers! the Rangers! Hurrah for the Rangers!”—and we rushed out to meet our friends, who, with our numbers, were now more than a match for the guerrillas. The tables were turned,

and the Mexicans now discovered that they had "*Caught a Tartar*;"—the besieged had now become the besieging party;—*sic transit gloria*.

Knowing that it would not improve their terms of surrender, to fire upon us now, they remained quiet, and proposed to throw down their arms if we would give them quarter.

This, of course, we consented to do. They were ordered into the plaza, where we proceeded to relieve them first of their *escopetas*, which were rendered harmless by being doubled around the corners of the houses,—then the contents of their pouches went to flavor some of the nearest wells. Their knives and pistols were transferred to the belts of the Rangers. The horses, to the number of two hundred and twelve, suddenly changed owners; and as the full rays of the morning sun poured down the mountain-side,—lighted up its rugged cliffs, and deep ravines, and streamed in a golden flood over the lovely valley of Monterey,—we started forth, with nearly two hundred sorry-looking "greasers," and the animals of their whole party, on our way to camp. A number of the guerrillas had escaped,—among them, much to our chagrin, was their notorious captain. He had broken up our *sandango*,—but we in return had broken up his troop.

As near as we could afterwards ascertain from the

villagers, the loss of the guerrillas was some thirty killed ;—while not even a scratch could be mustered in our party. We took our prisoners to headquarters, where, on being mustered, it was found that Martinez was not among them. Accordingly, as was the custom of the General, he ordered them to be well fed, and afterwards escorted by a party of dragoons beyond the camp, and dismissed to seek their homes ;—from whence, they, no doubt, soon sallied again, to molest our trains, and cut off our expresses, as before.

The horses we had brought in, together with their equipments and the arms, were awarded to the victors, among whom they were equally divided.

For several days after, the camp of the Rangers presented a lively scene. It was converted, for the time, into a horse-market. Many a noble animal, with his accompanying rigging, was knocked off, as low as five or ten dollars, which was really worth ten times the amount. Others were put up to be raffled for, at an entrance fee of a few shillings. One would stake his entire share of the spoils, against a comrade's, at a game of "old sledge." Another would generously bestow his upon friends whose own horses had become thin in service. My own gallant mountaineer had suffered some, as José had obeyed my orders, and kept him at the top of

his speed all the way, from the moment he left me in the village, till he drew up in front of the General's tent.

I, therefore, selected a hardy little sorrel from among my portion of the dividends, to relieve him for a few days from service, and give him a chance to recuperate.

Some of those same horses were afterwards brought to the United States, by returning volunteer officers,—and were much valued on account of their many good qualities.

CHAPTER VII.

The Sierra Madre.—Beautiful Valleys.—Mountain-path.—Legend of the Valleys.—The Black Stallion.—Lieutenant L.—The Gambler Trevinio.—Suspicious respecting Him.—Trevinio's generous Proposal.—How received.—Arrangements.—The Start.—The Prospect from the Mountain-side.—The Lieutenant's Absence becomes Public.—Much Anxiety on his Account.—Parties sent out in Search of him.—Return with Mexican Prisoners.—No News of the Lieutenant.—Strange Object appears in Sight.—Enters the Plaza.—Wretched Animal.—“For God's sake, Boys, help me off this Cross-cut Saw!”—The News flies.—The Lieutenant's Reception.—Promises to make a clean Breast of it.—His Journey and description of the Valley.—Ranchero Hospitality.—Trevinio leaves our Friend.—Continued Absence of the Mexican.—Time passes agreeably.—Determines to return to Monterey.—Return of Trevinio.—An Explanation.—*Poco Descanso*.—*Vamos para el Fandango*.—San Juan.—In a Trap.—Mocho Martinez.—Don Patricio.—The Examination.—The Officer unexpectedly meets a Brother.—An Irishman's ready Invention.—The Don's Account of Trevinio.—The Guerrillas sally out to attack a Train.—The Lieutenant again mounted; but not on the Black Stallion.—Commended to the Saints.—The Irishman's Kindness.—A painful Ride.

IN the rear of the city of Monterey, rises the highest crest of the Sierra Madre, but separated from the valley of Monterey proper by two parallel ridges of mountains of much less altitude than the mother chain,—yet of sufficient height to tax the

toil of the ambitious explorer, who would climb to their pine-covered tops.

Fair and fertile valleys, watered by mountain streams, lay between these ridges, which the feet of our men had never yet trodden, and but a few even had attained a distant glimpse of, from some of the neighboring mountain-tops.

Those who had been so fortunate, told wonderful stories of the beautiful landscapes, spotted here and there with white-walled ranchos glistening in the sun,—of silver-gleaming waterfalls leaping down the mountain-sides,—and rich pastures, enlivened by flocks of goats, and herds of black cattle.

Imagination could easily build, beyond these unexplored *sierras*, Edens of unsurpassed beauty and richness. Many a longing eye had rested upon those mountain-tops with a wish to behold what lay hid beyond. But of all our little army, none had yet assayed the attempt to scale those almost precipitous heights.

Standing in the plaza of Monterey and looking along the mountain, the eye could, at first, see nothing like a road ascending its rugged side; but, after a steady gaze for a moment, one might detect a light line running in a zigzag course down to the plain. In the early part of the day, when the sun shone upon it, it glistened like a silver ribbon,

gracefully flowing along a background of glowing green and umber. This was the only path from the city side to the fair valleys beyond. Frequently, with the aid of the glass, we might observe, moving along this bright line, the carbonero, driving down his donkeys, loaded with panniers of charcoal, or faggots of wood, gathered on the mountain, to be hawked through the streets of the city.

Occasionally, also, little parties of horsemen wound slowly and cautiously downwards. A false step of their mountain ponies might hurl them a thousand feet upon the rocks below. The mountaineer alone could travel this precarious path in safety. Few were the citizens or residents of the plain who dared ascend it, unless upon the rugged little donkeys and ponies trained to climbing among the rocks and chasms of the *sierra*.

Little parties among our own men had frequently been projected to visit those trans-mountain valleys, but, from various causes, had been delayed from time to time; and, as yet, none had ascended even to the top of the first range of hills, which stood like sentinels doing piquette duty at the base of the outlaying range of the mother mountain.

Among the many stories told of those valleys, was one, that had many vouchers among the rancheros, who had become familiar with us, and with

whom we had established a trade in the small commodities of the country. It was that, in one of those green pastures, fed a noble stallion,

“With spur and bridle undefiled,”

whose fleetness outsped that of the famous White Pacer of the Plains,—an account of which Kendall gives in his “Santa Fé Expedition.” This noble charger was represented as being a jet-black, full sixteen hands high, and of most majestic bearing;—and, withal, of so gentle a nature, as not only to mingle with the domestic herds of the rancheros, but to approach their dwellings, and venture even almost within touching distance.

In vain had their most expert *vaqueros*, mounted on their fleetest horses, essayed to cast the lasso over the head of this noble animal. He was ever on the alert, and playing around the hunters with motions as swift and as graceful as a swallow’s, would dodge the embrace of the treacherous noose. At length all efforts to entrap him were given up, and he was not only considered a privileged character, with the unquestioned freedom of the range, but, by degrees, began to be looked upon as a kind of mysterious animal—a sort of a “Flying Dutchman” or “Phantom Ship” of a horse.

Many were the rancheros who would aver that

at one moment they had heard his well-known neigh among the rocks of the mountain-side, and at the next would see him careering with mane and tail upon the breeze, a league away upon the plain. Distance seemed to be annihilated where he moved. Scarcely had the dust he made in one end of the valley time to settle, when again, away at the other extremity, he was dashing it from his flying feet. At one instant he would be seen quietly feeding at some distant point,—look again, and behold him, with head and ears erect, gallantly escorting some herd of mares up to the ranchero's door.

Each one had some marvelous story to relate of this wonderful black,—till, at length, the name of "*Old Apollyon*," as some of our men had christened him, became as common in our army as that of "*Rough and Ready*."

Among the many, whose curiosity had been excited by these rumors, was my friend Lieutenant L., of the Ohios. He had become acquainted with a dashing young Mexican, whom he had occasionally found presiding over a monte-table at one of the gambling-saloons of the plaza. He was a hawk-eyed, deep-looking fellow, who won the money of our young officers, and lost his own, with perfect recklessness. Indeed, he seemed more anxious to win their confidence than their *pesos*. He was suc-

cessful in both, and was on terms of friendly intimacy with many of them.

It was at length observed, that Trevinio was frequently absent from the city, and sometimes for many days together, and suspicions arose that gambling was not his only profession. Hints were darkly thrown out by some of his treacherous countrymen, whose pockets had been cleaned out by his superior cunning at cards, that he was a spy. There were Texas Rangers, even, who were ready to assert, that in their frequent rencontres with guerrillas, they had encountered those peculiar eyes of the monte-dealer in the ranks of those chaparral robbers.

Be that as it may, the wily Trevinio had wound himself into the confidence of our Lieutenant, with whom he passed, as he himself expressed it, for "a downright good fellow—for a greaser." The Mexican related many anecdotes of the famous Black Horse, which he declared he had frequently approached in his luxuriant pastures; and would be most happy to conduct his friend over into the valley where he ranged;—more than this, being a most expert thrower of the lasso, he promised to capture the renowned animal, should the Lieutenant but wish to become his master.

This was a most generous and unexpected offer,

and was gratefully accepted. Trevinio had touched the very chord, of all others, that gave voice to the Lieutenant's most cherished wish. Already he fancied himself the envied of all the mounted officers of the army, and looked forward with pride, when he should return to the States, the owner of so valued a souvenir of the campaign. Never for a moment had he a doubt of the skill and honesty of the Mexican.

But there was a proviso attached to the proposal; —an indispensable *sine qua non*, to make it a perfect contract.

The shrewd Trevinio was in want of a suitable horse, with which to cross the mountain, and successfully throw the lasso. He knew a countryman, he said, who was the owner of a very high-priced animal, the possession of which would make the thing certain. The arrangement was, for the officer to purchase this horse for the use of his friend, together with an entire new set of rigging. He could easily dispose of the whole again, on their return, for the amount of the outlay. Besides, as it would be best to go well armed, in case the rancheros of the valley should object to the unconditional surrender of their favorite stallion, he proposed that the Lieutenant should obtain of some of his brother officers, in addition to his own, two good revolver —

pistols. These last were novel instruments of high value among the Mexicans, one being, at that time, equivalent in value to a dozen good horses.

Another requisite to success was, that the Lieutenant should invite no friends to join the expedition, as a party might excite the suspicions of the people of the valley, and thus the object of the trip be defeated. The propriety of secrecy was also enjoined in their preparations. But the Lieutenant, sanguine of success, made confidants of a few friends, who were permitted to accompany them as far as the first range of hills.

It was on a calm and brilliant Sunday morning, as the troops garrisoning the city were drawn up, for weekly full-dress inspection, on the plaza, a small party of officers, who had obtained leave of absence for the day, rode past, and, turning down the narrow street which led westward, took their way towards the banks of the San Juan, whose crystal waters, pure from the mountains, formed the western boundary of the city.

Here, as by agreement, they were joined by our friend the Lieutenant, and Trevinio now prepared for the ascent of the sierra.

The party was well mounted—Trevinio upon the

animal his friend had purchased for him, and armed and caparisoned to his heart's content.

Fording the river, and riding through level fields of maize and sugar-cane, for a short distance, they soon came to the foot of the outlying hills, which they began to ascend. Here, on looking back, the most beautiful scene was presented to their eyes.

At their feet lay spread before them one of the most lovely pictures they had ever beheld. Behind them, and on either hand, towered the stupendous heights of the Sierra Madre,—beyond, from the valley, loomed up the spire of the Camanche peak, an isolated spur of the main range,—while away to the east spread the green “valley of Monterey,” bounded on that quarter, and shut in from the rest of the world, by the Sierra Alba; the mountains, on either hand and surrounding it, being an appropriate framing for so magnificent a picture.

Far as the eye could reach over the valley, its bosom was spangled with whitewashed villages and ranchos, which sparkled in the morning sun like gems of light upon a queenly robe. Nearer at hand, the city nestled, amidst its gardens and orange groves, in oriental repose.

The feathery palm and cocoa, springing side by side with the brilliant-leaved live-oak and magnolia, threw their shadows over the flat-roofed

houses, which gleamed like banks of purest snow, amid the deep green of the foliage, in which they were enshrined. The spires of the churches, crowned with their gilded cupolas, towering above the city, threw back the morning rays in bright reflection; while gardens, orchards, and fields of maize and sugar-cane, filled the valley beyond;—and below, at their very feet, between them and the city, glistened the silver sheen of the San Juan, as its cool waters washed the city walls, and, glimmering away in its tortuous course through the valley, was finally lost to view, around the base of the “Camanche peak.”

After remaining here a few moments, admiring the beautiful panorama thus spread before them, and giving their animals time to breathe, the friends parted,—the Lieutenant and the Mexican, to continue their journey, and the others to return to the city.

The usual routine of garrison life went on, and several days elapsed before the absence of L. was observed at the daily parade of his regiment. At length, however, it became known to every one that he had gone over the mountain,—and even the object of his absence had become as public as that circumstance itself.

A week passed away without his return; and his

friends naturally began to feel anxious for his safety. Fears were expressed that he had fallen into the hands of some of the numerous parties of guerrillas, who were known to be prowling about the country, and reconnoitering the roads leading to the city. At the solicitation of his captain, the General determined to send out parties of scouts, in search of the missing officer. These parties returned unsuccessful. Still another party was dispatched, with orders not to return, without bringing some account of him. After an absence of two days, they also returned, and reported that a herdsman had seen an American officer, a few days before, at a *fundango*, at a rancho he named. That on making inquiries at the rancho indicated by the herdsman, the people denied the whole story, and pretended to know nothing about him,—declaring that no *Americano* had ever visited the place. The officer in charge of the party, however, was convinced by what he saw of the rancheros, that they were endeavoring to deceive him; and, taking as a prisoner one of their people, who seemed to be a chief man, he returned to the city with him in charge.

Nothing being elicited from him, on examination, he was discharged, and permitted to return to his friends. Ten or twelve days had now elapsed since the Lieutenant had left us; and we were not only

convinced that we should never see him again, but had almost become reconciled to his loss. The new incidents which were daily occurring had almost driven the thought of him from the minds of many of his comrades;—when a strange-looking object, which had descended the mountain-path, was observed fording the river, and directing his course slowly towards the plaza, which he entered, and turned toward the guard-house. He was mounted on a miserable framework of bone, which, at some former period, had formed the substratum of a mule. The skin, nearly denuded of hair, was actually pierced by the sharp points over which it was stretched. With staggering and doubtful steps, the wretched skeleton bore its rider towards the group of officers, who had gathered in front of the guard-house, watching the approach of the strange apparition. The rider himself, the most curious object of the two, was covered with an old and ragged *serape*, which looked as if it had given shelter to many a generation of Mexican vermin before it came into the possession of the present owner. One corner of this old rag was passed under him, and constituted the only protection from the knife-like spine beneath him,—an old crownless ranchero's *sombrero* ventilated his head,—its slouched rim shading his eyes, and in part concealing his face,—while a pair



of slashed leather breeches, such as *vaqueros* wear, but made originally for a much smaller man, covered a portion of his nether extremities.

As this singular figure approached nearer to the group, they observed that a leathern thong was tied to each ankle, and passed under the gaunt belly of his bony steed.

While all eyes were intently gazing upon this odd arrival, they were surprised to hear themselves addressed—not in ranchero Spanish, but in most dolorous, yet, nevertheless, good English :—

“ For God’s sake, boys ! help me off from this infernal cross-cut saw ! ”

The familiar voice of our jolly lieutenant was immediately recognized, and gathering around him, we quietly cut the thongs, and relieved him from his uncomfortable seat ; and spreading blankets for him on the floor, in a corner of the guard-house, made for him a couch, which he greatly needed after his long and painful ride.

Like wild-fire the news of his strange arrival spread through the city, and the guard-house was soon thronged with friends to welcome his return, and laugh over his comical appearance.

In spite of his galled and painful condition, and the mortification, which he tried in vain to conceal, many were the jokes which his un-

merciful friends were disposed to crack at his expense.

“Lead the lieutenant’s horse to the stable, and have him well groomed and fed,” cried one ;—while another was very solicitous to know “where the lieutenant’s black stallion was.”

One waggish friend quoted Mazeppa, and asked him “how he liked his ride?”

Another again, affectionately hoped that he had left his friend Trevinio in good health ; while another still, declared he could “see that worthy gentleman descending the mountain-side, and carefully leading a magnificent black horse, which he had no doubt was the lieutenant’s.”

All these witticisms the poor fellow was obliged to endure with all the fortitude he could control. But at length he begged them to desist, and promised if they would leave him at peace for a while, to recover from his ride, he would make a clean breast of it, and detail every circumstance and incident of his journey and detention. With this promise they were content to retire, and leave him to refresh himself with food and rest, of which, indeed, he stood greatly in need.

On parting with his friends on the first mountain range, the lieutenant and the Mexican continued the ascent till they reached the region of

lichens and pines, and found themselves in a rarified atmosphere, where the clouds floated in masses below them, and partly shut from their view the plain whence they had ascended. Then, after a passage of a plateau, broken by huge angular blocks of granite, heaved by some mighty spasm of nature from her womb, when these everlasting mountains were brought forth—a passage of but a few hundred feet in extent,—they began to descend. Soon as the winds dispelled the vapors below them, the view of the valley broke upon their sight.

This, the lieutenant described as being more beautiful, even than rumor had painted it.

It seemed, from this point of view, to be one of a continuation of like valleys, which stretched away for many leagues, and were inclosed by corresponding mountain ranges, whose sides sloped by easy gradations down to their fertile bosoms. Fair meadows spread their beauties before them. Summer lakes, whose clear waters, supplied by mountain streams, and were never ruffled by violent storms, reflected the deep tints of *palma christi*, *acacias*, and *lignum vitæ*, and a thousand flowering vines and parasites, which grew upon their shores. These threw their protecting shadows down upon the snowy chalices of *callias*, and the many-colored blossoms of aquatic plants, which floated upon the

margin of the waters. The white cottages of *vaqueros* peeped, here and there, from amidst clumps of mesquites and agaves. Flocks of goats and herds of cattle fed among the rocks, at the foot of the hills, or lazily ruminated in the shade of the overhanging vines. The whole scene reminded our friend of pictures of which he had read in fairy tales and pastoral poems. It was an idyl by the Great Author, whose beauties could bear the tests of the severest critic.

The Mexican, who seemed familiar with every object around them, conducted him to the first rancho that lay in their path, being selected for that reason, as much as any other. Here they were received by a leathern-clad *vaquero*, with a frank and generous hospitality, such as is found only amongst this class of Mexicans, before they had been brought in contact with our people. Rangers, nor other parties of volunteers, had as yet penetrated into their valleys, to plunder and intimidate these kind-hearted and simple people. Consequently, the name of *Americano* had not yet become a word of contempt and reproach; but, although rumors of the war, and of our successes had reached them, they thought of us with the respect which a simple people naturally feel for a brave and victorious enemy.

The horses of the travelers were quickly stripped ; and after a bathe in the stream which flowed in front of the *jacal*, were hitched under the shade of a large acacia, and furnished with a plentiful supply of green grass and maize-leaves. Nor were the wants of the travelers less hospitably attended to. First, they were called to partake of a delicious cup of chocolate, a beverage prepared only in perfection by these people, while an abundant repast of *chile con carne*, *picadillo*, and *frijoles*, with *tortillas*, were being served up. After partaking of these savory messes, and having finished off with the fragrant *cigarito de pellejo*, they were invited to enjoy a refreshing siesta in hammocks swinging in the veranda, where the perfume-laden breezes springing up the valley soon lulled them into cool repose.

On the following morning, Trevinio left our friend at the *vaquero's* cabin, saying he should make inquiries among the neighboring ranchos, in relation to the object of their expedition.

In the mean time, the *vaquero* corroborated the reports the lieutenant had heard of the famous animal. Thus far, his confidence in his guide remained unchanged ; but, after an absence of two days of the latter, he began to suspect his honesty, and that all was not as it should be. His limited knowledge of the language, however, prevented

his making many inquiries respecting the standing and reputation of Trevinio. That he was a gambler by profession, he was aware; but, among his countrymen, where all, from the bishop to the peon, are gamblers, it did not derogate from the respectability of a gentleman to practice that honorable vocation.

Therefore, notwithstanding some little uneasiness at the continued absence of the Mexican, the lieutenant managed to fill up the time very agreeably to himself. In company with the *vaquero*, who was really a simple-hearted and honest fellow, he rode through the beautiful valley, admiring the rich landscape, and the many, to him, novel productions of the prolific soil; occasionally varying this agreeable pastime, by angling in the deep lakes, whose waters abounded in those beautiful enameled and speckled trout, that so much love the pure, cool element of mountain streams.

The time thus, rapidly enough, glided away; but the continued absence of the Mexican, and the consciousness that his term of absence from his regiment had expired, determined him to retrace his path alone to the city. For this purpose, his horse had been saddled and hitched in front of the *jacal*; but, just as he was bidding farewell to the friendly *vaquero* and his family, his attention was called from them by the sudden reappearance of the

truant guide, in company with a half soldier, half bandit-looking comrade.

“*Mil pardones, Señor Teniente,*” cried he, with a mock penitential look. “*Gracias á Dios, toda está buena* (all is right); at last I have found *el caballo negro*. *Vamos á la silla, amigo mio!*”

He explained his long absence, by declaring that, at length, he had got on the trail of the black horse; had followed it an entire day, and tracked him to a distant pasture, where he was now extending his patriarchal protection over a large herd of mares.

Then, with an expressive glance towards the “greaser” accompanying him, he continued, “And now, señor, with the help of my *bueno compadre*, he shall soon be yours.”

“Then let us be off,” replied the lieutenant. “For to-morrow must find us on our way over the mountains.”

“But hold,—*amigo mio!* I have had a long ride, with but little rest for myself, or my beast, since we parted; and, señor, you know the old proverb:—*Poco descanso, con mucho trabajo, preciso es por la alma.*”*

“Well, well! if you have had *mucho trabajo*, on

* Spanish proverb.—A little pastime, with much labor, is good for the soul.

my account, we will have all the more *descanso*, when we return. But what would you propose?"

"First, señor," replied the Mexican, "Before we try our lassos upon *el negro*, let us go to the *pueblecito** of San Juan, which is on our road, and join the *fandango* there to-night."

Now, if there was one peculiarity, in the constitutional temperament of the young officer, which predominated, it was the keen relish for the sports of the *fandango*, and a natural magnetic attraction towards the bright eyes and dark tresses of the lively *doncellas* to be found there.

"*Vamos ! vamos !*" shouted he, and springing into his saddle, soon left the two behind him, in his rapid race along the grassy pathway.

After a few hours' rapid riding, the three arrived at a large rancho, having a prepossessing appearance, from the good size of the houses, many of which were of two stories, with verandas and balconies in front, and a general air of comfort and neatness prevailed about the place. This was *San Juan*.

"*Aquí estamos !*" cried Trevinio, as he sprang from his saddle,—“and now, *compañeros*, hurra for *el baile*.”

* Little town.

They were soon surrounded by the people of the place, who hailed the two Mexicans as old acquaintances, while they expressed the greatest cordiality to the stranger, who accompanied them. Their horses were led away, and they were conducted to one of the principal houses, and invited to partake of a plentiful dinner.

The meal being disposed of they proceeded to the plaza, where were assembling the dancers under arbors of palm-leaves, which had been erected for the occasion. The *fandango* was about to open, but seemed awaiting the coming of some other party, before the music should strike up. Presently the tramp of horses was heard, and,—to the utter chagrin and mortification of our Lieutenant, the square was soon filled with a large band of guerrillas, at whose head he recognized, from the loss of the right hand, the notorious Mocho Martinez!

In this dilemma, where was Trevinio, the faithful guide, the skillful thrower of the lasso! That worthy had suddenly disappeared; and it was in vain that the American sought him, with his eyes, among the crowd of cut-throats, by whom he soon found himself surrounded. Now the truth flashed upon him, he had been betrayed into this trap by that wily scoundrel.

Before he had time to recover from the surprise,

which this sudden change in his prospects had caused, he felt his arms seized from behind, and drawn tightly together with a leathern strap, fastened above the elbows. Of course, in this condition of things, resistance was in vain; and he surrendered at discretion, with the best grace he could command. Indeed, he pretended at first to understand it, as a good-natured but rather too practical a joke,—which they were playing off for their own amusement, as part of the performance of the evening's frolic.

He had, however, but little time to put this forced interpretation upon his situation,—as he was immediately escorted by the crowd, to one of the houses, where he was brought *vis-à-vis* with the robber chief of the band.

Martinez received him with a smile, in which were expressed mingled malice and exultation, at having an American officer in his power.

Directing him to be seated, with a mocking courtesy, the guerrilla proceeded to relieve him of his revolvers, watch, and the contents of his pockets. These articles he transferred to his own person, and then ordered one of his men to request the attendance of "*Don Patricio*."

This personage presented himself in the shape of a beetle-headed and yellow-whiskered little Irish-

man, whose dull gray eyes peeped from beneath a continuous line of shaggy yellow brows. His narrow, retreating forehead was covered with matted curls of wiry hair, which seemed not to have renewed its acquaintance with a comb since he had deserted from the American army;—for the Lieutenant immediately recognized him as one of those honorable gentlemen.

“Bedad! Mister Captain”—said he to the Lieutenant, to whom, from force of habit, he involuntarily touched his *sombrero*,—“bedad! it’s sorry I am, sure, to see the likes of ye in so bad a way.”

“Who the devil are you! and where did you come from, that I find you in this infernal gang?” demanded the young officer,—forgetting for the moment, in the presence of the deserter, that he was a prisoner.

“Arrah, now? be aizy, darlint, will ye! sure, ye’r no betther nor a high private, in this fine company av foreign gintlemen.”

“Sure enough,” returned the Lieutenant, with a smile, that he had so far forgotten himself,—and feeling it would be better to propitiate this man’s good services. “Sure enough, my good fellow,—you are right. But come, can you tell me what disposition these hang-dogs propose to make of me?”

“There now, me jewel, since ye spake like a gintleman, that ye are,—give yerself no onaisiness at all,—but lave the business to me,—and, indade, but it’s meself will get ye aff safe and sound, if it’s in me power, sure.”

“What does the *Americano* say?” inquired Mocho, in his own language.

“He says,” replied the Irishman, without a moment’s reflection, and in such Spanish as only an illiterate Irishman can invent, “he says, your honor—that he’s right glad to see me ag’in, and in so respectable a company of gintlemen,—and sure as me name’s Patrick O’Brien, it’s meself as is glad to see the like of him.”

“Why,” asked the guerrilla,—“are you so much rejoiced to see the *Americano*?—did you ever know him before? Who is he?”

“Know him! your honor, shouldn’t I know my own brother,—if it was ever so far from the ould counthry! It’s me own mother’s son he is, and as good a *catolico* as your honor.”—Here the little fellow tipped the Lieutenant a sly wink, as much as to say—“Leave it to me, and I’ll make it all right with him.”

“Ask him,” resumed the Mexican, “what brings him so far from the American army?”

The Irishman was about to invent some other

fiction of his own, in reply to this question,—when the Lieutenant, aware that the true cause of his visit was known to El Mocho, briefly informed his new-found relative, and requested him to answer, this time, at least, the truth.

“It’s a horse, your honor, that he’s afther—the Black Stallion of the valley yonder.”

“Aha!—but why does he come armed in this manner? Did he expect to find enemies among *vaqueros* and *peons*, through whom he would have to fight his way?”

Instructed by the prisoner again, the interpreter replied, “that he did so at the recommendation of his friend and guide, Trevinio.”

This prompt and correct answer seemed to have the good effect he hoped for, as a more kindly smile warmed over the dark features of the guerrilla.

After a few more interrogatories, the object of which was, to obtain information in relation to a large train of stores, which would probably leave Camargo in a few days, for headquarters,—and which the Lieutenant permitted the interpreter to answer as his own ready wit might suggest,—Martinez directed the straps to be removed from his arms. He was then good-naturedly invited to take part in the amusement of the night before them. Congratulating himself upon the favorable turn his

affairs had now taken, the Lieutenant thanked the Mexican for the courtesy, and appearing to throw off all further concern, mingled with the dancers in the plaza.

He observed, that a guard had been placed about the square to prevent his escape, should he be disposed to attempt it. Again he sought among the faces that were about him, for the dark eyes of his treacherous friend; but the latter, not caring to encounter one, whom he had so villainously duped, had departed, with the Lieutenant's two horses, to parts unknown.

Finding the little interpreter, whom he began to consider as a countryman, if not a brother, he inquired who the Mexican, they called Trevinio, and who had accompanied him to the village, was?

“Him? Why, captain, he is the shrewdest fellow, and the greatest scoundrel sure, of this most honorable troop.—He is our captain's right bower. O! he's a perfect trump of a fellow.—Señor Trevinio?—why, he's our first lieutenant;—and it's himself who goes over among *our* folks, and larns all their sacrets;—he knows all about the trains, as well as the Ould Man—Ould Rough and Ready, I mane.”

Having been thus enlightened in reference to the

friend to whom he was indebted for his present situation, the lieutenant inquired—"why it was that his captain, who was notorious for his utter disregard to all humanity, in his treatment of such Americans as had unfortunately fallen into his hands, should, thus far, have treated him with so much leniency?"



"Sure, captain, didn't I tell him yer was me own counthryman, and me brother at that? and didn't I tell him, too, yer was a *good Catholic*? The praists have instructed him to give quarthers to all Catholics,—for nothing but howly wather 'ud wash their blude from his sowl. But, me friend, keep yer two eyes well skinned;—they'll not kill yer, but, sure, some of the black divils will be afther playin' yer some ugly thrick afore yer lave them."

For a number of days, the guerrillas remained at this place, and treated their prisoner with much kindness. In particular were the women of the village attentive to all his wants. Some even offered to assist him, should he wish to attempt an escape. Mexican women are always kind, especially to the sick, or the unfortunate prisoner, who happens to be quartered among them.

When, however, the wagon-train was expected to be on the road from the lower country, the guerrillas prepared to waylay and attack it. They,

therefore, notified their prisoner that he should accompany them, or should return alone to Monterey if he chose. Of course he preferred the latter. And now, in a spirit of frolicsome deviltry, as much as anything else, they proceeded to strip our friend of his neat suit of uniform, and, in exchange, presented him with the cast-off rags of some poor *vaquero*. They then procured the most miserable, worn-out, and worthless cargo-mule they could find, among a number turned out to die,—upon which he was ordered to mount. He was then tied to this wretched animal, as we have seen, and directing him by a different, and shorter path than that by which he had reached the village,—they wished him a pleasant return to his friends, and the protection of *todos los santos*.

To the credit of the *Don* be it said, he remained true to his adopted brother, to the last. After his mule had been started upon the trail, the Irishman followed him for some distance, and, unperceived by the guerrillas, put into his hands a *zurron* of *pan de maiz*, and jerked beef, and a gourd of water,—“which,” said the warm-hearted fellow, “you will have need enough of, before your ride is ended on that sorry brute.”

Turning to thank him for all his kind offices, the Lieutenant saw that he had ridden back to the band.

He was now left alone, to his own thoughts, and the long and toilsome path before him, with the skeleton of a mule beneath him, every motion of which cut like a saw.

“But, lieutenant,” we asked, as he ended his recital—“what of the Black Stallion?”

“Well, to tell you the truth, boys,—I missed him that time. But, never mind; I’ll have that horse yet.”

And now, in concluding this narrative of the Lieutenant’s adventure, I will only say,—from that day, as long as he remained with us, he never could overcome a certain repugnance to animals of the long-eared variety;—and a *peculiar sensitiveness* in regard to the color of *black horses*.

CHAPTER VIII.

Expecting an Attack.—Camp broken up.—Critical Situation of the Army.—Intentions of the Enemy.—All Persons ordered under Arms.—The City deserted.—The Ohioans.—Available Force.—An Order.—Lieutenant Stuard.—His Miraculous Success.—The March.—Clearing the Chaparral.—Crossing the Salinas.—The Fighting.—The Campo Santo.—Enter Marin.—Lieutenant-Colonel Irvin.—A Good Supper.—Irvin's Commissary.—Burning of the Train.—Lieutenant Barbour.—Major Gaines' Surrender at El Salada.—Urrea and Canales.—No Quarters to the Drivers of the Train.—Four or five Drivers escape.—The Escort, Prisoners of War.—Burning Stores.—An Incident.—Act of Bravery.—Return March.—Encamp at Agua Frio.—Finding a Key.—An Act of Courtesy ; how returned.—*Tenga muchissimo cuidado*.—An Intended Attack.—Resumption of the March.—Exhausted Condition of the Command.—Firing in the Rear.—The Hollow Square.—Col. Morgan.—Charges of the Lancers.—Captain Graham.—The Last Shot.—Our Dead.—Arrive at the Citadel.

DURING the month of February, and a few days previous to the decisive fight at Buena Vista, the small party left in defense of the stores, and hospitals, at Monterey, were in momentary expectation of an attack from the enemy, who, in large numbers, were occupying all the approaches to the city. The dust

rising from their movements was discovered in every direction ; and at night their signal-fires were gleaming from every mountain-side and hill-top for leagues around us. The camp, which had so long been pitched in the beautiful woods of Santo Diego, had been broken up ; and the handful of troops, who, for some weeks, had been its occupants, had marched into the citadel. All, with the exception of the First Ohioans, had sought the sheltering walls of that fortress.

None could tell what would be the fate of our noble little army, at the pass of Buena Vista, where it was known a battle was inevitable. But all felt, that upon the result of that fight depended our own fate.

The enemy, as we had learned by the prisoners our scouts had brought in, as well as by intercepted orders, had determined to make a simultaneous attack upon all the posts along the line, from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Saltillo, in the event of routing our small force at Buena Vista.

All persons in any way connected with our army, —sutlers, clerks, writers, and even the black-legs and pickpockets, who had followed in our wake—were mustered, and required, under penalty, to arm themselves for the general defense, and enrolled, for the time, in the different corps. All the horses of

the citizens which could be found, had been pressed into our service. Nearly all the foreign residents had sought shelter in the citadel, or had also enrolled themselves with us. The Mexican citizens had privately left the city, in small detached numbers, and in the night, to swell the forces around us.

At length the city was deserted; scarcely a family was to be found within its limits. Desolation seemed to brood over the place. The vacant dwellings echoed, with a foreboding sound, the footfall of the horseman, as he traversed the streets from the plaza to the citadel.

The Ohioans were the sole occupants of the town. These were left to guard the remaining stores, which could not be received into the narrow limits of the fort.

They were to hold the plaza as long as possible, should an attack be made, and when no longer able to hold their position, to set fire to the stores and fall back into the citadel. The house-tops about the plaza were occupied by these troops during the day, who could from thence reconnoitre the Mexicans, as they presented themselves beyond the river, and on the principal avenues leading to the city. They more than quintupled our little force, and had they been any other, than troops of the

Mexican army, would have ventured the attack then.

Our entire force within the citadel, including such supernumeraries as had been hastily armed, together with the battalion of Ohioans, all counted, did not amount to *six hundred men*; and these, by the excessive hard duty which, for more than a week, had deprived us of the necessary sleep and food—for we had no time to prepare the latter, being day and night, continually, on the alert,—but illy prepared us for a long continued struggle, had a well-concerted and continued attack been made. Such was the state of affairs when, one afternoon, an order from Colonel Ormsby, who commanded at the citadel, was received by us in the plaza, to prepare in haste, for a forced march upon the town of Marin, while our position in the city was to be occupied by other troops.

Lieutenant Stuard, of the Second Ohioans, had almost miraculously cut his way through the masses of the enemy, as they covered the road, for more than twenty-five miles, and arrived at the citadel. Mounted on an extremely fleet animal, he had left the command to which he was attached, a small party of one hundred and twenty-five men, under Lieutenant-Colonel Irvin, which had been attacked in the town of Marin, and were already surrounded,

and pent up in the plaza. This small party, the Lieutenant stated, were, when he left, barricading the streets leading into the plaza, and fortifying against a force of between 2,000 and 3,000 regular troops and guerrillas, under the Mexican General, Urrea. He also stated that Irvin had so skillfully planned his defenses, that if his ammunition held out, he could maintain the position till relief, for which he asked, should arrive.

Stuard's success in reaching us, was indeed miraculous, for it was a race through the gauntlets, from the moment he left the barricades in Marin till he arrived at the fort. At one time he had his cap shot from his head; at another, a stirrup-strap was cut away,—then his bridle-reins were parted by a bullet. The iron scabbard of his sabre was so dented by balls, as to render it impossible to draw the blade. Twice his revolver was brought into service to free his bridle from the grasp of Mexicans, who sprang from the chaparral to arrest his course. Once an attempt was made to lasso his horse, which he frustrated by suddenly checking him, and shooting down the guerrilla who attempted it. Finally, his noble animal unhurt, and himself but slightly wounded in his bridle-hand, he reached the citadel.

Forthwith, the above order was issued, and two

companies of the First Ohioans, with two companies of First Kentuckians, were soon on the march to the relief of our friends.

The day was fine, but the roads were excessively dry and dusty, and our men much exhausted by the fatigue of the last few days' extraordinary duty. But now fatigue was forgotten in the excitement of a prospect of meeting with the "yellow skins," and a fight. We all knew the imminent necessity of immediate reënforcement to our friends, who were, even then, perhaps, discharging their last round of ammunition.

By sunset, we had reached the ford of Agua Frio, where it was intended to order a halt to breathe the infantry ; but raising a shout, they begged to be allowed to proceed. We had passed Agua Frio some two or three miles, when darkness overtook us ; and here the road which, for some miles before, had passed over a kind of prairie, now became hemmed in on either side by dense thickets of chaparral, which had a somewhat suspicious appearance.

Shortly after entering this gloomy portion of the road, our advanced scouts returned, and reported a large body of the enemy, drawn up under cover of the chaparral, on the right and left.

Major Sheppard ordered a halt, and requested the

writer to ride back to the centre, and order the officer, in charge of the four-pounders, to move up with his pieces, charged with canister shot, and open the way, by directing a discharge in the line of the road, and right and left into the thickets. This order being promptly and rapidly obeyed, it was amusing to hear the hurry the enemy made to *ramos* out of the range of the leaden hail. This firing was continued at intervals of ten minutes, till we reached the Rio Salinas.

Here we found the enemy had preceded us, and crossed the stream in advance. However, contrary to our expectation, they made no attempt to prevent our passage.

After fording the Salinas, we again came upon more open ground; but the darkness being so great, we could not distinguish objects at any distance.

We now heard the firing at Marin, and knew our friends were fighting, and no doubt holding their own. Soon, however, the firing ceased, and fears were entertained that their ammunition had given out. Such, it appeared afterwards, was the case; but the enemy was not aware of the fact, and hesitated to force the barricades. Besides, the Mexicans knew we were approaching, and opened a discharge of musketry upon us, from the clumps of chaparral as we moved on towards town. But a

few rounds of grape and canister quickly silenced the firing, and caused them to fall back ; when the order was given to move in double-quick time ; and at the top of our speed, we drove them before us towards the place.

By this time the moon, which for some hours had been hidden behind a heavy mass of dark clouds, partially peeped forth, and revealed the road before us, and the town, about a quarter of a mile distant. Here we expected to find the enemy, now joined by those who had retreated before us, drawn up in line to dispute the passage. But no enemy was to be discovered. There were two entrances into the town, in the direction we were moving. These were two streets, diverging from the *campo santo* (burial-ground), flanked on each side by high walls. The *campo santo*, also surrounded by massive walls, formed the point of divergence, and enfiladed the main road. Before advancing further, Major Shepard wished to ascertain if the enemy had taken position at this point, and, accordingly, ordered the writer to advance and reconnoitre the place.

This was a very important position, and we had no doubt the Mexican general would have seen its value, and have availed himself of it. From this point he might have occasioned us much trouble—being completely sheltered from our artillery, he

might have rained down a shower of bullets, which our little force could not have withstood.

I must confess I approached the place with anything but pleasurable emotions, as I was in momentary expectation of a volley of musketry from the formidable-looking walls. But as I rode up, I could detect no embrasures in the wall, which was too high to be overlooked. I raised myself, with my foot in the saddle, while my well-trained animal remained perfectly quiet. Still I was not high enough ; but feeling with one foot, I found a lodgment for the toe of my boot on a portion of the cornice, or ornamental coping, and, with some little exertion, was enabled to look over. Much to my relief, I acknowledge, I found the place vacant. Descending to my saddle, I returned to the major, and reported accordingly.

The Mexicans, not caring to join issue with our artillery, had retired without further demonstrations, and had drawn up on the other side of the town, while we entered the plaza over the now partially-removed barricades.

At this moment, the moon rose clear and bright above the heavy bank of clouds, which had obscured her disk all night, as if to illuminate the joyful reception which awaited us from the besieged, and a happy omen to our union of forces. Three times

three as hearty cheers as ever rolled forth upon the ear of night, now welcomed us to our friends, whose cause for rejoicing was great indeed. Surrounded by thousands of the dastardly cut-throats, and the last shot expended, they must soon have surrendered to the overwhelming numbers, but for our opportune arrival.

Col. Irvin had conducted his defenses so skillfully, and was so well supplied with stores and forage from the town, that, had he been amply supplied with ammunition, he could have kept the enemy at bay for any length of time. He had quartered himself in two of the largest houses on the plaza, on opposite sides, and was so comfortably situated, that immediately upon our arrival we were invited to sit down to a well-prepared supper, which, of course, after our long and fatiguing march, we were in most excellent tempers to do justice to. Nor were the adjuncts of good wine and *puros* wanting to give a finish to this most welcome feast.

The citizens had hastily abandoned the town, upon the approach of the Mexican troops, and the Americans, not knowing how long the siege might endure, had profited by the occasion, and appropriated to their own use such articles of provision as they deemed necessary. So, while we were regal-

ing on the choice eatables and drinkables of the Marinos, our tired and hungry horses were grinding, with greedy jaws, their maize and barley, while stabled comfortably in their parlors.

The colonel facetiously remarked,—“his commissary was a most generous fellow, and had supplied more and better rations than had ever before been his good fortune to enjoy in the service;—for which favors, however, he felt duly thankful to the Mexican General, Urrea.”

On entering the town, we observed, some distance beyond, large fires had been kindled, as we then supposed, either as a feint, to attract our attention that way, or as beacons to signalize our presence to other parties of the enemy in the vicinity.

The next day, however, we ascertained that these fires proceeded from the burning of a train of wagons, which they had captured that day while on its way to Monterey.

We learned that the commissary at Camargo had dispatched a large provision-train for headquarters, and, contrary to instructions, had neglected to furnish a sufficient escort for the then unsafe condition of the roads. Sending several hundred wagons, containing important stores, ammunition, and specie, under the protection of but one officer (Lieut.

Barbour) and *twenty-five men*, and at such a critical time, was an act of unsoldier-like imprudence, which, during the war, was equaled only by the surrender of Major Gaines and his squadron of Kentucky cavalry, near El Salado;—who, neglecting, in the midst of the enemy, to post sentinels about camp at night, had been surrounded and captured without the firing of a single shot.

A portion of Urrea's command, in conjunction with Canalés and his guerrillas, had awaited in ambush the approach of this valuable train, and captured it, without any attempt, on the part of the insufficient escort, to defend it. The enemy, amounting to some 1,500, were secreted in the chaparral, and Lieutenant Barbour did not suspect their presence, till he found himself suddenly hemmed in on all sides, when, to resist, he well knew would insure the immediate massacre of his little party.

In accordance with a standing order of the Mexican commander-in-chief, no quarter was granted to the teamsters, and an indiscriminate slaughter was made of them. Many of them were burned alive on their wagons, and their bodies were afterwards recovered, most savagely mutilated. Four or five only of these unfortunate men escaped to tell the fate of their comrades. These came in to us, the

next day, on our return towards Monterey. One poor fellow, I remember, who had been wandering all night in the chaparral, and whom the horrors of the massacre had driven to distraction, had become so wild that we found it necessary to run him down, and take him by force to the wagons.

The work of butchery completed, the Mexicans cut the harness from the mules, and, converting the wagon sheets into sacks, filled them with such portions of the loading as could be conveyed away on the backs of the animals, and hastily retired to their hiding-places among the ranchos. They left behind them the burning and blackened corpses of the poor teamsters scattered over the plain, amid the charred and broken remnants of the wagons and their freights.

The lives of the escort had been granted them;—but they were marched to the interior, where they were retained as prisoners till the end of the war.

But to return. Our blankets were scarcely spread to catch a few moments of repose, when the notes of the *réveille* broke upon our ears, and admonished us of the return of day, and the resumption of our weary march over the route we had just passed. Exhausted as our men were by the fatigue of the past day and night, they were soon busily engaged in preparation of their hasty breakfast, which was

quickly dispatched, and cheerfully awaited the order to proceed.

In the mean time, the stores which the besieged had provided, together with a quantity of camp equipage, which might have retarded our return march, were deposited in a pyramid, in the centre of the plaza, and burned, rather than leave them to furnish "aid and comfort" to the enemy, who, we knew, would reoccupy the place as soon as we should have withdrawn.

Here I must not neglect to record an incident which occurred while the stores were being destroyed. A German, belonging to Captain Kearn's company of Kentuckians, who had accompanied our party, jocosely declared,—“He did not intend to return to Monterey as he had come;—he would have a horse to ride, and one, too, of his own.” So saying, he was soon seen climbing, with a rifle in his hand, to the flat roof of a house on the corner of the plaza. He had discovered a group of lancers on the outskirts of the town, who were watching our proceedings. Deliberately drawing a bead on the foremost and best mounted of the party, our German fired;—and we knew by his exultant shout that he had emptied a saddle. Quickly descending from the house-top, and snatching a loaded musket from the hands of the first man he encountered, he

bounded over the barricade, and for a moment was lost to sight, in the turning of the street. Soon, however, he emerged upon the open space beyond the town,—and here, those who had reached the house-tops, to watch his progress, saw the object of his race. He had shot a lancer, seated on his horse,—and, running up, caught the bridle of the animal, and dragged the rider from him, as he still, in his dying grasp, clung to the mane. But, as he was in the act of mounting his prize, the German was attacked by three of the lancer's comrades. Turning upon his assailants, he discharged his musket, and one of the number tumbled headlong from his saddle. Then clubbing his gun, the third Mexican was made to kiss the ground—with a fractured skull. On seeing the fate of his comrades, the remaining lancer, putting spurs to his charger, quickly lengthened the distance between himself and the *maldito Americano*.

Our friend, being left sole master of the field, coolly proceeded to strip the blankets and arms from the dead Mexicans, and selecting two of the best horses, mounted one, and leading the other, galloped back to the barricade, with the little red flags of the lancers streaming over his shoulders. The barricades were removed for him, and, amid the cheers of his comrades, he reëntered the plaza.

He had now a horse of his own,—and most gallantly was it won. Calling to a messmate, and a countryman, he bade him accept the other horse, and a portion of the arms and blankets, and, with the permission of the colonel, they fell into the ranks of the mounted volunteers,—now ready for the march. The above feat of gallantry was witnessed by hundreds of the enemy, as well as by our own party; but I am not aware that the brave fellow was promoted, or even noticed in any official report of those days.

The sun had risen high above the Sierra Madre, when the final order for moving out of the place was given. The hospital wagon, containing several wounded men, and those who had been disabled from the last night's march, occupying the centre,—we moved out of the town. As was anticipated, the enemy no sooner perceived us retiring, than they moved into the plaza and took up our recent quarters. No doubt, the Mexican general, in his official report of the affair, described it as “a most brilliant victory over a vastly outnumbering force of northern barbarians;” and much grandiloquent Castilian was expended upon it, in the name of “*Dios y libertad*.”

In consequence of the now wearied and worn-out condition of the command, our return was neces-

sarily very slow. We frequently rested by the way, and, on arriving at Agua Fria, we determined to halt for the night. We had yet about six leagues before us for the morrow. The sun was some hours above the horizon, when we recrossed the river, and made our arrangement for encamping.

First among my duties was, to select a suitable place for the shelter of our sick and wounded. Amongst the latter were the teamsters, who had escaped from the massacre of the train. I found the largest and most commodious house in the village, the one best suited for my purpose, shut, and doors and windows strongly fastened. Inquiring among the people, who had gathered around us, for the owner of the house, a man presented himself, and offered me other houses close at hand, stating that the owner of the house in question was absent, and he knew not where the keys could be found.

“I can find a key to the doors,” said I, and ordered some men at hand to batter them open, with the butts of their muskets.

As they were about to obey my order, the Mexican ran up to me exclaiming :

“*Oh ! por el amor de Dios ! señor,—yo tengo las llaves ;—aquí son,—aquí son,*”—(for the love of God, sir, I have the keys ;—here they are,—here they are),—and, drawing from under his shirt a bunch of keys,

begged me to spare his doors, and they should be opened.

On entering the house, I was somewhat surprised, when, instead of finding it vacant, as I supposed, it was full of the young girls and women of the place, who, it seemed, had been hastily assembled in this, the strongest building,—for protection,—not so much from us,—whom they little feared,—as from the Mexican soldiers, a party of whom had withdrawn from the place just before we arrived, and were still near. Of this, however, we were then in ignorance. I entered, and quieted their alarm, by assuring them of our protection and respectful treatment; and forthwith had a guard placed around the house, with orders to permit none but Mexicans to enter.

This act of courtesy, on our part, was, no doubt, the means of saving our party from the same fate that had befallen the unfortunate escort and drivers of the train. The sick and wounded were made as comfortable as circumstances would permit, in the out-buildings, belonging to the house occupied by the females. Our scanty supper was disposed of, and the wearied soldiers had most of them sought repose upon the ground.

In company with a friend, I had also spread my blankets on a cowhide upon the ground, near the door of one of our temporary hospitals. When about

to throw ourselves upon them, I observed the proprietor of the house watching us with apparent interest.

He several times approached, and seemed desirous to speak; but we were in too much need of rest to pay much attention to him. In a few moments he went into the house, and entered into earnest conversation with the women. At length, as I lay in a state of half-forgetfulness, I was aroused by some one laying his hand on my shoulder. Supposing some one had come to complain of a foray upon his hen-roost, by some of our hungry fellows, or for some other frivolous purpose, I rudely ordered him off, saying I was fatigued and wished to sleep; and, drawing my cap again over my face, yielded to "nature's sweet restorer." But the Mexican would not be put off thus; and I was forced to yield to his importunity.

"*Que queries ?*" (what do you want?) demanded I, in no very good humor at being thus disturbed.

"*Señor Medico !*" replied he in a low tone, "*tenga vmd. muchissima alerta, por la noche !*"

"Why," asked I, "is it so necessary to be on our guard? Have we anything extraordinary to apprehend to-night?"

"*Si señor !*" he replied—and then went on to say—"as we had been so kind as to respect their wives

and daughters, and the men had not molested anything belonging to them,—he could not see us attacked by a superior force in the night, without giving us a fair warning.

“To the right,” continued he—“on yonder side of the river, is a body of 1,400 *lanceros*, and pursuing on your rear, from Marin, is another of 1,200, who intend to cut you off at this place. The plan is, for one division to get in advance of you,—between this place and the Monterey road,—so as to cut off your retreat, while the other attacks you while sleeping.”

On further questioning the man, I was convinced of his sincerity. In short, he proposed to take me to a spot where the fires of the enemy might be seen.

Thanking the Mexican for this important information, and requesting him to mention it to no one else, I awoke my sleeping companion, and imparting to him what I had learned, we started together in search of Col. Irvin,—upon whom the command had devolved, on leaving Marin. After a long search over the village, and entering every house we came to, we at length found him asleep on a table, in a vacant house.

He immediately gave orders to resume the march towards Monterey, so that, in the event of an attack,

he might have the better choice of ground upon the highway; and also with the view of preventing the enemy from getting in our advance.

With much low-muttered grumbling, our wearied men obeyed the order. The night was clear and frosty,—the moon had not yet risen,—but the stars afforded sufficient light to show us the road. As yet, no enemy had passed;—and with slow and weary steps, we remeasured the dusty way we had passed the day before. Till near morning the men and animals dragged themselves along,—spiritless and exhausted. But as we reached the rancho of Santo Domingo, it was declared impossible for the infantry to proceed another step. It was, therefore, concluded to park the artillery and wagons, and endeavor to snatch a few hours' repose. In spite of the cold,—the men no sooner halted than they threw themselves exhausted upon the ground. The beams of the morning light brought the order to proceed. Reluctantly we threw off our frost-covered blankets, and prepared, as we supposed, for the last few miles of our painful march. But hardly had we moved out of sight of our resting-place,—when the heavy, rattling discharge of musketry was heard on the road in our rear. This firing could only proceed from some party of our friends, engaged with the enemy. But who had been so near us without our

knowledge? It was known to Colonel Irvin that his commanding-officer, Colonel Morgan, with the remainder of his 2nd Ohioans, might be somewhere behind him, on his march from Cerralvo, which place being no longer tenable, it had been determined to evacuate. But from the large force of the enemy on the road, it was considered doubtful if he could have advanced so far through them.

The firing was continued at intervals, and appeared approaching. The order to face about was given, and this time obeyed with alacrity. With hearty cheers, the foot-sore and hobbling men hastened on, forgetful of their recent grumblings and pains, in the excitement of the moment. Each fresh volley of the still approaching musketry seemed to instill new life and vigor into their before exhausted limbs. Still we pushed on, and still nearer came the sound of the conflict.

The mounted men among us, being in advance, on ascending a rising point in the road, discovered the cause of the firing. A body of American infantry, covered on each flank and rear by a vastly superior force of Mexican cavalry, were moving in hollow square along the road. Steadily and coolly they advanced, under the fire of the enemy,—returning volley for volley, as the cavalry charged up, on either

side, and, after discharging their carbines, fell back again into the cover of the chaparral.

This was the command of Colonel Morgan, who had cut his way through the enemy, along the road, till he had fallen in with the forces united at Agua Frio, and intended for the attack upon our little party. We had given them the slip; but Morgan had marched late, and encamped on the further side of the river,—and, crossing before daylight, and before the enemy had cognizance of his movements, or he of theirs, had fallen into the trap the enemy had prepared for us.

Dogging us thus along the road, they made three or four charges upon our square in less than half the number of miles. In the second charge after we had joined them, one of our cannoneers fell, transfixed by a lance, as he was in the act of applying the match to his piece.

In this charge also fell Captain Graham, of the 1st Kentuckians. This officer had been acting as commissary at Cerralvo; and, on the abandonment of that place, had accompanied Morgan, on his way to headquarters, to rejoin his regiment.

The captain, armed with one of Colt's revolver rifles, had discharged five barrels, each time emptying a saddle.

At this charge, he had one other shot remaining

in his cylinder. Mounted on the top of a loaded wagon, that he might see over the heads of the men, composing the sides of the square, he brought his gun to his shoulder, and, as his finger pressed the trigger for the last shot, and the foremost man of the charge tumbled from his horse,—a random shot from the enemy struck him, and he fell headlong from the wagon, with a bullet through his brains.

I ran up to him as he fell ; but he had ceased to breathe. *It was his last shot.*

The Mexicans invariably overshoot ; and the Captain had been warned of the useless exposure of his person,—“But,” said he, “I have had five good shots, and intend to have the sixth.”

In the last charge we lost another man,—a private of the Kentuckians.

At last—the enemy finding it impossible to break our ranks, and our artillery mowing down their men at a fearful rate,—they concluded to fall back, and finally withdrew ; leaving us to pursue our march unmolested toward the citadel ;—where, with our dead and wounded, we arrived about noon, in the utmost need of repose after this wearisome and eventful march.

CHAPTER IX.

Morgan's Command marches to Saltillo.—City of Monterey entirely deserted.—No Breakfast.—Aunt Hannah.—Surgeon Snail.—A Search for a Breakfast.—Don Urbano Mendez.—Melancholy appearance of the City.—Our Friends not to be found.—Doña Felicite.—Success.—Carrying Orders.—Morgan's Men returning.—Breakers ahead.—Lanceros.—A Challenge, a Volley, and a Race.—The Best Horse.—Carbine Shots.—Molino Blanco.—Delivering Orders.—Major Wall.—The Road to Saltillo.—Scenery.—Report of cannon among the mountains.—Trying a hand at Artillery.—Its Results.—Caught a Tartar.—Variety of Climate.—Riding in advance.—“No hai, Señor.”—How to get a Dinner.—The Mexican Shepherd Dog.—His Intelligence.—An Incident.—La Rinconada.—Paso del Muerto.—Singular Custom.—A Strong Fortification.

THE day following the incidents narrated in the last chapter, Colonel Morgan, now joined by the party of Colonel Irvin, continued his march to Saltillo, then the headquarters of the army;—and, by the time the sun had peeped over the mountains, he was on the road.

At this time, the city had been deserted,—the forces that had occupied the plaza having moved into the citadel.

My own mess had been broken up; and, in the



AUNT HANNAH. — Page 175.

confusion of things, I found it impossible to get breakfast at the fort, or anything else in the way of refreshment, except a cup of coffee, through the motherly kindness of "Aunt Hannah," an old colored woman, the cook of Surgeon Jarvis's mess. She had a large tent just outside the entrance to the fort.

The old woman regretted that she had nothing more to offer me, remarking that, "In des yer drestful hurryin' times, a body couldn't cook a meal, nor nuffin comfortable like."

While partaking of "Aunt Hannah's" hospitality,—still in my saddle,—my friend Surgeon Snail, of McKee's regiment, rode up and begged a cup of the same refreshing beverage. But the old woman, having already drained her coffee-pot for me, had none to give him.

"De Lord bless you, young masser," said she, regarding the empty coffee-pot in her hand with a melancholy aspect, "I's mighty sorry; but 'pears to me dat everybody in de fort, and out de fort, do think, dat dis yer tent is pitched right over a bilin' spring of ready-made coffee,—like dat spring of hot water over yender by de mountain,—dat,—what you call um?"

"*Agua caliente*," suggested I.

"Yes, sir, *arger calumete*. Now you jes look

dar," pointing to some empty camp-kettles outside her tent; "I's done made five of dem big kettles full already. De Lord above only know whar it's all gone to. But laus! what can a body do when de poor creturs come, and come, and beg ole Aunty for jis one cup: and dey been marchin' and fightin' all day yesterday. But now, you get down from yer hoss, and take a seat on de camp-stool, and I'll make you some in jus no time."

The Doctor was about to accept of "Aunt Hannah's" invitation; but at this moment it occurred to me that a Mexican family, with whom I had been on most friendly terms, might have remained in town. I knew such had been their intention. I therefore proposed to my friend to ride over, and intrude upon their hospitality for a breakfast.

Don Urbano Mendez was one of the most respectable residents of the city; and, being a near relative of General Ampudia, and also having the "safe-guard" of General Taylor, he felt himself safe in remaining in charge of his property, whatever party might possess the city.

So, thanking "Aunt Hannah" for her kindness, we started off in quest of a breakfast.

Not a sound was to be heard as we approached the plaza, save the sharp echoing rattle of our horses' iron feet over the pavement, as we rode

leisurely through the streets; the shadows seemed to fall with a deeper gloom, and the air felt damp and chilly. A solitude reigned over the deserted city, as if some fearful epidemic had swept over it, and extinguished the last lingering spark of human vitality. Even the barking of dogs,—those pests of Mexican towns,—for once was hushed; they seemed to have joined their masters in the general exodus. Save ourselves, scarcely a living, moving object met our eyes. Now and then, however, we perceived the shadow of some marauder, who, startled from his work of plunder, by the noise of our approach, stealthily glided around a corner, or slunk away into some dark alley.

We rode up to the doors of houses, where we had been accustomed to meet with ready welcomes from their proprietors;—they were now tenantless, and our knocks were answered only by an echo from the opposite side of the street. We rode from street to street,—but the same sullen stillness prevailed. On arriving at the house on the plaza, which had been the residence of Don Urbano, we found it also vacant and closed. Concluding that not a family remained within the limits of the city, we recrossed the plaza, and, turning down the street of San Ignacio, were on our return to the citadel; when, having traversed half the length of the

street, we were arrested by the sound of my name called from the window of a house we were passing. Checking our horses, we turned towards the direction of the voice, and discovered it proceeded from Doña Felicite. This was the present residence of the family we were in quest of. She had been attracted to the window by the unusual sound made by our horses' feet, and, finding we were friends, hailed us; and throwing open the large doors to the carriage way, we were invited to ride in; and received a warm and friendly reception. They had left their residence on the plaza, she said, and moved into this house, as being in a more retired part of the town, in case it should be reoccupied by the Mexican army. As may be supposed, we did not leave the house of our friends breakfastless.

I had been ordered to accompany Morgan's command to Saltillo; and this hunt for a breakfast had consumed the time I should have used to overtake it. On returning to the fort, I was met by Colonel Ormsbey, the commanding-officer, who still longer detained me, as he wished me to take an order to Colonel Morgan. He said he had received information, which led him to believe that the road to Saltillo was covered by parties of the enemy,—like the road we had passed over the day before; and he wished Morgan to leave a company of men and one

piece of artillery at the *Molino Blanco*, to protect a mule-train which he intended to dispatch in the afternoon. So that by the time I had taken the road, I was some two hours behind the command. My friend, the doctor, accompanied me as far as Arista's Garden, on the outskirts of the city, where he left me to pursue the road alone.

I had proceeded no further than the point of the Saltillo road, opposite the Bishop's Palace, when I met a squad of soldiers returning to the city.

They were accompanied by a sergeant, whom I recognized as belonging to the 2nd Ohioans.

I inquired how it was they had left their regiment, and why they were returning? The sergeant replied, that, being like myself detained in search for a breakfast, they had lingered behind their comrades, and, on pushing on to overtake them, had passed but a little way beyond the place where we met, when they were fired upon by a party of the enemy secreted in the chaparral. They, therefore, considering it imprudent to proceed, concluded to return to the town.

The sergeant endeavored to dissuade me from the attempt to overtake the command, as he believed it impossible to get through the enemy.

I replied, that as I had been made the bearer of an important order to the colonel, I should at all

events make the attempt;—and requested the sergeant to report the facts to Colonel Ormsbey, on reaching the citadel.

“But, sir,” said he, “if you are determined to proceed, keep a good look-out, as you turn the foot of that hill yonder, on your right. If I am not much mistaken, a party of lancers is secreted in the chaparral there.”

While conversing with the sergeant, I had dismounted, tightened my saddle-girth, and put fresh caps on my revolver and holster-pistols. Having completed this, I remounted, and, bidding good-morning to the men, proceeded on my way.

I had just turned the point indicated by the sergeant, when my horse pricked up his ears, and, tossing his head from side to side,—as was his habit, when Mexicans were about,—satisfied me that I was in the immediate neighborhood of the lancers. A little further on, I caught sight of their little red flags,—which they carry on the end of their lances,—waving over the tops of the bushes. They appeared to be a party of about a dozen, and had discovered me on my first coming round the foot of the hill. Something less than a quarter of a mile lay between the lancers and myself; and as I had entire confidence in the speed and bottom of my noble little horse, I gave myself no particular

uneasiness, and kept on my course as if I had not seen them. They were disposed, however, to give me fair notice,—and raised a shout, at the same time waving their little pennons, to show me their real character. My horse quickened his pace at the sound;—and I observed a number of them moving down the hill, as if to intercept me. I now remembered there was a road near where I first discovered the lancers,—coming in from the Pisqueria Grande road, and uniting with the Saltillo road about half a mile ahead. No doubt they intended to come down that road, and cut me off before I could reach the junction. Now there was not a moment to be lost, and the object was, to frustrate their intentions, by passing that point ahead of them:—and if the road was clear, I had no doubt I could do it. So, drawing my handkerchief from my pocket, I waved it towards them, as a challenge to the trial of speed.

This was replied to by a loud yell; and a volley of carbine shots rattled in the bushes about me. Then putting spurs to their horses, at the top of their speed, the lancers came thundering down the road upon me.

My intelligent little animal seemed to know what was going on; and now, catching his bridle-bits between his teeth, he flew over the ground like a bird. Never before having had occasion to test his best

speed, I was surprised at the way he skimmed over the road. His feet hardly touched the ground as he sped along. It was but an instant, and the junction of the roads was left far behind. Here I checked my horse, and, looking round, saw that my pursuers had only just reached the main road, and were now nearly as far off as when the race began.

Finding I had the advantage of them in legs, at least, they amused themselves by sending shots after me; these, however, mostly fell short, but one occasionally stirring up the dust in the road near me.

The lancers continued to follow me thus, till I came up in sight of the command, at the *Molino*. Here a halt had been ordered, to rest the men, and give them an opportunity to replenish their canteens with the cool, sweet water of the spring, for which the place is noted.

On riding up, and handing the order to the Colonel, he observed that my horse showed evidence of hard riding. He also said that he had heard the report of musketry in the rear, and inquired of me the cause. I informed him that the road appeared to be occupied by the enemy, and that a small party of lancers had followed me all the way from near the Bishop's Palace.

On receiving this report, the Colonel, calling to

Major Wall, directed that officer to escort the mule-train, from this point, as far as *Rinconada*, and instead of the *one* company ordered by Colonel Ormsbey, he would leave him *two* companies of men, and one of the eight-pounder howitzers, as he had no doubt he would have occasion for them before he got through.

The road to Saltillo, after arriving at *El Molino Blanco*, passes through a narrow valley, bounded on either hand by lofty and precipitous mountains, as far as *El paso del muerto*, or Dead Man's Pass. This is the only passage through the Sierra Madre, for several hundred miles of its course. This mountain range, on the left, rises abruptly from the plain, a sheer perpendicular wall of granite; its crest being crowned with lofty pines, and standing in bold relief against the deep blue of the sky.

On the right, the mountains are of a more irregular and broken character; in some places ascending gradually from the valley, and covered with forests to the tops; in others, scarred and seamed by deep ravines and unapproachable chasms, and towering in irregular and naked peaks to the clouds. In many places, torrents leaped, foaming and roaring, from out the face of the cliffs, and united with the San Juan, as it flowed through the narrow plain, crossing and recrossing our road many times in a

few leagues; and then away through the "Valley of Monterey," and on through the States of Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, to mingle with the waters of the Rio Grande, below the town of Camargo.

We had passed the *Molino* about half a league, when the report of a cannon came booming up the valley, awakening the slumbering genii of the mountains, who roared back the sound again, like the prolonged reverberations of thunder: for—

"Every mountain now had found a tongue,"

and the echoes reflected the sound from crag to peak, till, with low mutterings, it died away up the long reach of the valley. Scarcely had the last growl of the echoes ceased, when another, and louder report succeeded, and reawakened the thunders of the mountains. Our friend, the Major, it seemed, was trying his hand.

The cannonading not being continued, the Colonel did not deem it necessary to return, or send a party back to the *Molino*. I suggested the probability of the Major's having discovered the party of lancers with whom I had had the trial of speed, and had given them a dose or two of grapes, for his own amusement. The Colonel being of the same opinion, the march was continued. We were correct, as, on my return to Monterey, subsequent to the battle of Buena

Vista, I called upon Major Wall, who still remained in garrison at the *hacienda* of *Rinconada*, and spent several days very agreeably with him, and his officers, climbing the mountains, and reconnoitering the country about the Pass. On inquiring of the Major the cause of the firing, after we had left him at the *Molino*, he informed me that the lancers, who had given me chase, had continued to hover about the place, intent on watching his movements; that he gave them but little attention till they were joined by a party of some fifteen more, when he thought it a good opportunity to try his hand, for the first time, as cannonier, and sent them his compliments in the shape of a canister of grape-shot. This was more than the lancers had counted on, as they did not dream that his little force was accompanied by artillery.

“Now, come with me,” said the Major, “and I will show you the results of those two shots.” And leading the way to the *corral*, pointed out to me about a dozen fine cavalry horses, that had been taken on that occasion.

It appeared that the lancers, on receiving the first charge of grapes, had foolishly dismounted, and, leaving their horses at the foot of the mountain, had clambered amongst the rocks for shelter, and, under cover of the second discharge, the Major’s

boys had rushed, in and captured their animals, leaving the poor lancers to return on foot to their command, to report the fact of their having "caught a Tartar."

Our road passed up an inclined plane all the way to Saltillo,—through all the gradations of climate, from the region of the palm, the banana, the orange, and the sugar-cane, in the valley of Monterey,—up to the temperate elevation of Saltillo; where ice from the mountains is hawked through the streets at all seasons of the year.

After a short distance only from the valley, the traveler leaves behind him the gardens of the tropics, the orange groves, and the columns of smoke, ascending from the sugar-houses, and finds himself riding through fields of upland rice and oats, with here and there a patch of cotton or maize; the last being the product alike of the extremes of temperature, from the northern temperate to the equatorial line. Then passing upwards, he arrives amid luxuriant fields of barley, rye, and wheat; and still ascending, he meets with the peach, first, and then comes the apple, the pear, the cherry, and the other hardy fruits and plants of the temperate regions. So that, in a ride of about seventy miles, the traveler experiences almost all the variations of climate, and meets the productions

of three zones. He mounts his horse in the morning, suffering from lassitude and the debility induced by the extreme heat of the plain; and before night is glad to wrap himself in all the extra clothing he may have been so fortunate as to have brought along with him.

The cool, tonic atmosphere of the higher region has given an invigorating tone to his system; and, notwithstanding he has ridden a long day's journey, he is better prepared at night to repeat it, than he was in the morning to commence it.

It was my custom, while on a march, to ride alone, some distance in advance of the column,—unless circumstances made it necessary, as was sometimes the case, to remain with it. In this way I had opportunities to look about me, and observe such objects along the road as were worthy of remark,—free from the dust and confusion which accompanied the column. Besides this, on approaching a rancho or village, my chances were much better for obtaining refreshments, than on the arrival of the main body, when there was always a rush for what little the people might have to sell to us. At the best it was very difficult to obtain anything to eat on first applying. Much diplomacy was frequently resorted to, in the shape of cigarritos and bad Spanish, before the Mexican would admit that an ounce of

provisions was to be had in the place; for the invariable answer was "*no hai, señor*" (not any, sir), with the extended fore-finger of the right hand playing a peculiar pantomime, to the right and left, about four inches in front of the speaker's eyes.

To the question, "Have you any eggs?" the eternal "*no hai*" is the response.

"Any *chile con carne*?"

"*No hai!*"

"Any *frijoles*?"

"*No hai!*"

"Any bread—*pan de maíz*?"

"*No hai!*"

"Any *tortillas*?"

"*No hai!*"

"In the name of heaven, have you anything?"

"*No, señor, no hai—nada, nadita!*" with a strong emphasis upon the last syllable of the last word—"nothing—not anything."

Begin to talk Spanish, tell him you are *bueno catolico*, call for a light, and offer him a cigar,—the ice is broken and he begins to warm towards you. Still murder Spanish for him, and when his cigar is consumed, offer him another; if this is not sufficient to win your man, praise his country, the fine climate—and this you can do without doing violence to your conscience—and then ask him if he has

any *chocolate*, and ten to one the answer now will be:—

“*Sí, hai!*”

And while this delicious beverage is being prepared, gently intimate that a few *tortillas* would be an acceptable accompaniment to the chocolate.

“*Sí, señor!*”

Soon you hear the sound of the *metate*; and the clapping of hands promises a heap of those primitive cakes, warm from the earthen pan. Now ask him if he has any *huevos* (eggs).

“*Sí, hai!*”

And so on, he will admit one article at a time; so that, if you are far enough in advance of the crowd, you may manage to make out a very good dinner.

On this march, while riding about a mile in advance of the main body, I had an opportunity of witnessing an instance of the wonderful sagacity of the shepherd dog of Mexico, than which, a finer race is not found in any country.

This animal is of a large, shaggy breed, much resembling, in general appearance, the dog of Newfoundland; and much larger than any variety of the European shepherd dog that I have ever seen. He is a good-natured and peaceable animal, very rarely barks, and never bites, unless much provoked. These dogs often have the entire charge of large

flocks of goats and sheep, and are frequently met with, leagues away from their owners' residences, keeping faithful guard over their charge.

A party of volunteer soldiers, on a long march, were not particularly nice in their distinctions between *meum* and *tuum*, as regarded the kids and lambs of the Mexican flocks; and often, in spite of orders to the contrary, a very savory and tempting odor of roast kid arose from the mess-fires of the men, when encamped for the night.

Now, these shaggy guardians of the flocks had come to know, by what means I cannot say, this peculiar fondness of the soldier for the young and tender ones of their charge, and began to regard him as a biped wolf, whose evil designs it required all their instinct to guard against.

As I said before, I was riding in advance, and about a quarter of a mile in my rear, following me, I observed the adjutant of the regiment, also riding alone. We had just passed a rancho, some distance from the road, and, on ascending an eminence, I discovered a large flock of goats feeding quietly along the highway. Near by, apparently asleep, on a flat rock, lay a remarkably large and fine-looking dog; while at some distance off, further along the road, and beyond the flock, I noticed another. I checked my horse to admire the beautiful dog near

me, and it was not till I had called to him several times, that he condescended to pay the least attention to me. At length he moved slowly towards me, took a leisurely survey of my horse and myself, and, seemingly satisfied that I was all right, returned to his rock, and his siesta. By this time the adjutant had arrived, and I directed his attention to the dog; but the addition of another party began to excite the interest of the animal. Running to the top of a group of rocks, which overlooked the road in the rear, he discovered the dust raised by the advancing column; and giving a short, loud bark, as a signal to his companion, he sprang from the rock, and ran forward to meet him. In the meantime the other dog had answered the signal, by a similar bark, and came on to meet the first. The two met about half way, and, laying their heads together for a few moments, seemed to be engaged in earnest conversation; then, on parting, they wagged their bushy tails, as if a mutual agreement had been arranged between them, and starting to the rear of their flock, and gathering in the straggling ones, started them, upon the gallop, up the side of the mountain; so that, by the time the column came up, the dogs and their flock of goats were half a mile off, and out of harm's way.

Experience, or instinct, had taught these faithful

creatures that there was danger to their charge, on the passage of a body of soldiers; while a single person, on riding up to the flock, did not excite any suspicion of evil.

The sun had sunk below the mountain, whose deep shadows fell over the road, as we passed up a long, dark avenue of elms and mountain willows, and entered the hacienda of *Rinconada*. This place, as its name implies, lies in a *corner* or angle formed by the mountain range; which here takes a sudden turn to the north.

A short distance beyond this point commences the famous gateway through the Sierra Madre, known as the *Paso del Muerto*, or "Dead Man's Pass." Directly in the path leading up this gorge, one meets the monument commemorating its name. It is a huge cairn or pyramid of cobble-stones, which has been accumulating, from year to year, over the remains of some murdered traveler. Each passer-by, innocent of the blood of him who lies beneath, casts a stone upon the heap, as an evidence against the murderer. We each added our testimony against the foul deed, by depositing the customary tribute of a stone.

This Pass is, probably, one of the strongest natural positions in the world, for a military stand. The mountains present, on either hand, a wall of

naked cliffs, towering perpendicularly to the skies; while a deep and narrow cañon is the only passage to the steep wagon-track, ascending to the table-land beyond. A handful of determined men might defend the place, in spite of any force that could be brought against it. A single battery upon the point of the cliff, on either side, could be trained so as completely to enfilade the passage.

The Mexicans had fortified this point, on the commencement of the war, but when Ampudia had surrendered the city of Monterey, and retired through this Pass, he caused the fort to be dismantled; and no attempt was afterwards made to reestablish it.

CHAPTER X.

Saltillo.—Population and Character of the People.—Influence of the Priests.—Priestly Harems.—Immoralities of the Monks.—Their Control of Public Taste.—Fountains—Lavadores and Vendedores.—The Alameda.—Deserted by the sullen Citizens.—Resorted to by the Americans.—Houses of Saltillo.—The Serape and Jorongo.

SALTILLO, in the State of Coahuila, is situated at the foot of the mountains, on ground somewhat broken into hills and gullies, the bottoms of the latter being the receptacles of the filth and scavange of the city. It contains a population of some 15,000, mixed Indian and Spanish, the Indian blood greatly predominating. The people have always been represented, by travelers, to be of a vicious and vindictive character, suspicious and unfriendly in their intercourse with strangers, and partaking of all the worst traits of the two races they represent.* They are the opposite, in every respect, of

* While we were in possession of the city, the assassination of our men was of daily occurrence. It was absolutely dangerous for an individual, or even small parties of three or four persons, to visit the outskirts of the town, as they were liable at any time to be knifed or lassoed by the cowardly and treacherous "greasers." The

the people of Monterey,—the difference being as marked as that of the climate of the two places; and during our occupation of their city, they held themselves entirely aloof from any association with the "*Maldito Americanos*." Any approaches of our officers or men to an acquaintance with them, were most uncivilly repelled. Whilst at Monterey, on the contrary, we were not only on friendly terms with the inhabitants, but, in many instances, the warmest friendships were established between them and our people.

The unfriendly disposition of the Saltillanos may, in a great measure, be attributed to the great influence exercised over them by their unprincipled priests. Much less intelligent and refined than the people of Monterey, we would naturally find the priests exerting more control in the formation of

men were often induced by false representations to enter houses, from which they never issued alive.

After the battle of Buena Vista, assassinations by means of the lasso became of so frequent occurrence, that General Wool, who, on the return of General Taylor to Monterey, succeeded to the command, issued an order permitting the soldiers to shoot down any Mexican, who might be found within the limits of the city, with a lasso or lariat attached to his saddle-bow. This order, however, was soon rescinded, as a spirit of retaliation being provoked, our men often revenged themselves by shooting down all such as they had reason to suspect, and legalized the killing, by leaving a lasso on the dead man's person. It is but justice, however, to our men, to say that they rarely revenged themselves upon one innocent of American blood.

public character and morals. The latter city, with a larger population, does not contain one-fourth the number of churches and priestly harems—for the convents and nunneries are nothing more,—that are to be found in Saltillo; and the same rule holds good in the cities of Mexico, as in all other Catholic countries, that the tone of character and public morals improves in inverse ratio to the number of priests and ecclesiastical institutions attached to them.

The monks are in hourly and intimate association with the people, both in public and private, and not only take a share in, but direct the everyday actions and opinions of society. They not only conduct the many religious ceremonies of papist idolatry in the public streets, but the rules of cloister life are so lax as to allow them to mix freely with the populace, in all their games and amusements, whether public or private; and from the respect with which the masses are accustomed to regard them, and their superior intelligence, they easily control the public taste and morals.

If the upper classes of society have escaped from the trammels of monkish influence, the middle and lower classes regard them with as much superstitious reverence as they did a century ago. The fantastic eloquence of the middle ages still keeps its

ground here. The Mexican preacher, carried away by his enthusiasm, seizes upon the most startling metaphors. Sometimes he represents God *as making the sun his charger, and the moon his stirrup* (*cubalgando el sol, y estribando la luna*). Sometimes it is an obscene story, to which, with the most imperturbable gravity, he attaches a religious moral. When out of pulpit or confessional, the same man who inculcated the severest asceticism, utters the raciest jokes, and sings the best songs in some *tertulia* on the ground-floor.

He even pushes his anxiety so far as to furnish the laity with hints about dress. He gives excellent directions about the cut of a new suit of clothes; nay, more, he charges himself, sometimes, with their purchase, frequenting assiduously the saloons of fashion; and there is no appeal from his criticism. Very often his complaisance is not of the most disinterested kind;—too often, his purchase is a kind of tribute paid to a family, whom the reverend father supports at his own expense, on condition of tasting clandestinely in its pleasures.

The monk is everywhere, except at his convent. Everything is an attraction to him; bull-fights, cock-fights, gambling-tables, and theatres; every place gives him an opportunity of displaying his whims and oddities. Let no one fancy that his compliant

manners operate against him, as a priest and spiritual director.

The Mexicans understand to a nicety the bond which unites devotion to worldly pleasures.

When the monk, late at night, wends his way to his convent, after a day spent in dissipation, the passers by, when they see him, bow the knee with as much respect as if his pious discourses and conduct were not in startling contrast with each other.*

The city has a number of plazas, in which are fountains, throwing up large columns of the coolest and purest water, conducted from the mountains. The margins of these fountains are resorted to by the *lavadores*, or public washerwomen, who throng the place at all hours of the day, busily plying their labors, accompanied by the ceaseless clatter of their tongues. Here, also, assemble the venders of fruits, ices, *chile con carne*, *pan de maiz*, *pulque*, *mescal*, and other small articles of trade, who, with their customers, and the *lavadores*, monopolize the fountains, and add to the picturesqueness of the scene.

The city also boasts its *Alameda*, or public promenade. This is a large square, laid out into symmetrical alleys and cross-paths; the alleys converging into a large common centre, in which are fountains

* Gabriel Ferry.

and *jets d'eau*, inclosed by a circle of myrtles, roses, jessamines, and a great variety of odoriferous and flowering shrubs. The spray from the fountains, falling upon these in dewy moisture, makes the air delicious with its coolness, and the perfume of the opening blossoms.

The alleys, bordered by lines of weeping willows, which, arching and meeting overhead, shut out the heat and light of day, and creating a dreamy twilight beneath, make this spot a chosen retreat from the Babel sounds of the plazas, where the confused voices of the *vendedores* and *lavadores* are continually ringing out upon the ear.

During the time of our occupation of the city, these walks were deserted by the sullen natives, who remained, and entirely relinquished to the "Northern Barbarians," who had sole possession of them; and, notwithstanding the enlivening presence of the fair *doñas* and *señoritas* of Saltillo was denied, to add a charm to the dim and silent avenues, yet we spent many hours of pleasant idleness among them. This was an agreeable spot to meet and talk over the gossip of the army; to recall the virtues and recount the merits of our noble comrades, who had fallen in the unequal struggle on yonder bloody battle-field; to make an interchange of our dreams, and fond remembrances of our far-off homes; and to

speculate upon the chances, and mischances of returning to the arms of those loved ones, who were waiting and praying for us there.

The houses of Saltillo are built in the same style as other Mexican towns, of flat-roofed, one-storied dwellings, mostly of stone, as this material is abundant. There are, however, many *adobe* houses, occupied mostly by the poorer classes. Many of the residences exhibit the evidences of taste and wealth, but in no degree in proportion to similar residences in Monterey. The only article of manufacture, for which this place is noted, is the *serape*; large numbers of which are transported to every part of the Republic. This article is furnished here of every degree of fineness and quality, from the coarse blanket of the *peon* and *mozo de mulas*, costing a few reals, to the finest *jorongo* of the cavalier, worth often several hundred *pesos*.

CHAPTER XI.

The Contrast between the two Armies.—Taylor changes the Plan of Battle.—Surprise of the Mexican Commander.—His certainty of Victory.—Arrangements for cutting up the retreating Americans.—A Thermopylæ.—Washington's Birth-day.—The Long Roll.—Taylor goes to Saltillo.—The Advance of the Enemy checked.—Troops in Line of Battle.—Taylor returns to the Field.—Riflemen engaged on the side of the Mountain.—Fighting ceases for the Night.—Our Loss the First Day.—Loss of the Enemy.—Miñon's Brigade.—The Mounted Rancheros.—Colonels Blanco and Aguierra.—Taylor again returns to Saltillo.—Santa Anna's Address.—Martial Music.—Reflections.—Striking the Camp.—The Sufferings of the two Armies during the Night.

SALTILLO will ever be memorable in history, as the scene of one of the most extraordinary battles ever recorded in the annals of warfare. No battle of modern times was ever comparable with the battle of Buena Vista:—and ancient history can show but very few instances at all comparable with it. It was a struggle between a handful of raw, undisciplined militia, in a foreign land, thousands of miles from their homes, on the one hand,—and, on the other, a host of the selected veterans of a regular and thoroughly-disciplined army,—one of the proud-

est in the world,—which had been trained to the profession of war, and tested its strength in many a battle-field,—troops fighting upon their own soil, in defense of their own country and homes, and prompted, by every principle of patriotism, to exert every nerve, to drive the foreign invaders from their land. It was a battle in which the opposing parties were less than 5,000 undaunted Anglo-Saxons on one side, opposed to a force of more than 25,000* of a mixed race of Spanish and Indian blood on the other.

There was not, on our side, a single regular infantry soldier in the fight;—and, according to the report of Major Mansfield, of the engineer corps, not a single mistake was made during the whole day.

It had been the intention of General Taylor to await the approach of the Mexican army at Agua Nueva; but the ground being of such a nature that the enemy might easily outflank our little force, it was concluded to fall back upon the Pass of Buena Vista.

Santa Anna had calculated on meeting us at the former place, and offering us battle there. His

* Counting the strength of the main body, under Santa Anna, at his own estimate, and the forces under Miñon, Blanco, and Aguierra, there must have been opposed to us, on the 23d, a force of more than 25,000.

astonishment was, therefore, great, when, on emerging from the mountain-gorge, far enough to command a view of that place, he found it entirely abandoned.

“ At first, he imagined our forces had retired under the cover of intrenchments, which he had heard we had thrown up ; and he immediately directed his troops so as to turn our right, in order to gain La Encantada and the road between us and Saltillo, in accordance with a part of one of his three previous plans of operation. But upon approaching the ruins of the hacienda, a Mexican servant, whom he found there, informed him that our army had been evacuating its position, ever since the preceding day, and had fallen back upon the city. By this movement, all his purposes, based upon the expectation of resistance at Agua Nueva, were rendered abortive. But this masterly strategy of our commander, in his change of position, was then, as had been calculated, construed by Santa Anna into a precipitate retreat.

“ Therefore, without stopping to refresh his already exhausted troops, he pushed on with his whole cavalry force, and his light division, to cut us to pieces. This he believed he could the more readily accomplish, as he had previously ordered General Miñon, with his 2,000 choice troops, to get in rear of us, if possible, at Buena Vista ; if not, by the Pass of Palomas Adentro, and a narrow and

winding pathway over the mountains, to the valley east of Saltillo.* Supposing that order already executed, he indulged the hope that he could yet entrap, between two formidable portions of his army, what he imagined to be our panic-stricken and fugitive columns. Elated by such a brilliant prospect, he urged more rapidly forward his weary and nearly famished troops, leaving directions for his artillery and heavy infantry to follow as fast as possible.

“ Thus, by General Taylor’s falling back to Buena Vista, he caused Santa Anna to become inspired with the hope just mentioned. Under its influence, he compelled his whole army, already suffering from thirst, and worn down by the fatigue of a continuous march of thirty-five miles, over a desert, to hurry on fourteen more, without rest, and with only the refreshment of a meagre repast, and a single draught of water.

“ No calculations could have had results more fortunate than those of General Taylor. Santa

* “ General Miñon says, in his report, that Santa Anna did not direct or suggest the latter movement until the evening of the 22nd ; that before that time he (General Miñon) had taken the responsibility of moving thither, and had gained a position east of the town, as soon as he could do so after he had learned that General Taylor had fallen back on Buena Vista. Santa Anna himself is the opposing authority.”

Anna had cherished the vain belief, that his antagonist remained totally ignorant of his movements; and, by his extreme solicitude, to keep up that ignorance, until the moment of attack, he permitted himself to be completely out-generaled, even on this very point. For his own place and position were perfectly known, while he himself remained, as he unwillingly admits, entirely in the dark, as to General Taylor, whose retrograde, and apparently confused and hurried march, decoyed him into what he has since termed a Thermopylæ. It is very doubtful if, with all his superiority of numbers, he could have been induced to venture to this spot, had not his elation, at the prospect of our speedy destruction, borne him so far forward, before he was undeceived, as to our flight, that he could not recede, nor avoid a battle without disgrace.

“He was, therefore, singularly unfortunate, in thus having the scene of his anticipated engagement so suddenly, unexpectedly, and, as it were, mysteriously changed from a known to an unknown point.

“Nor was he less so as to the *time* he had selected for it. If in the whole year there be one day, above all others, when the heart of an American is naturally animated by the purest sentiments of patriotism,—when all that is great and best in his country’s

history is brought most vividly to his mind, as an example which should strengthen his purpose and nerve his arm to emulate the glorious deeds of the past,—that is the day which gave birth to *The Father of his Country*.

“But it was on the morning of Washington’s birth-day that Santa Anna indulged in the delusive hope, that an army of Americans, unmindful of its sublime associations, and recreant to their country and their name, had basely fled before him.

“It was eight o’clock when the ‘long roll’ called our men to arms. No one, who then witnessed the cheerful alacrity with which they seized their weapons, and sprang to their places in the lines,—who saw the firm resolve impressed on every countenance in that determined little band,—can ever forget the sight.

“Every banner was unfurled to the bright sun and enlivening breeze; and, as the various bands of music struck up the national air of ‘*Hail Columbia*,’ the sacred battle-cry—‘*The Memory of Washington!*’—passed from regiment to regiment, and from corps to corps, amid the most enthusiastic shouts.

“Could the friends at home, of those here marshaled for the conflict, have seen the spirit which animated them; could they have beheld them cut

off from the hope of returning with honor to all they loved, except through their own brave exertions; surrounded,* as they were, by foes bent on their destruction, proverbially merciless, smarting under the disgrace of recent defeats, and now about to fight under the immediate eye of their most distinguished general;—could their dearest friends have seen them thus,—not one but would have glowed with pride at their gallant bearing, and would himself have girded on their arms, and, invoking for them the aid of the god of battles, would, in the spirit of the heroic past, have bid them go forth to victory, or, if it must be, to the sacrifice.”†

On the evening of the 21st February, General Taylor had gone to Saltillo to give some orders in reference to the defense of that place, where were collected together all our stores and munitions that were not immediately needed in the field.

General Wool being second in command, had, therefore, the command of the troops during the temporary absence of General Taylor; and, as the

* The 2,000 cavalry, under General Miñon, had already come through the Pass of Palomas Adentro, in the rear of us; and General Urrea and General Romero, with another brigade of cavalry, had previously been sent through the mountains by the way of Tula, and were at this time on the road east of Monterey.—See *Santa Anna's Report*.

† Capt. Carleton's Buena Vista.

vast clouds of dust, along the road from Agua Nueva, indicated the approach of Santa Anna, at the head of a large force of cavalry, Wool gave the order for the troops to move forward to the battle-ground.

In the mean time, the enemy continued to pour along the road, confident of an easy victory,—when they were brought to a check by the sight of Washington's battery of eight pieces, which was descending a slope of the road leading to La Angostura, where he had been ordered to take position. The 1st regiment of Illinois volunteers had also gained a high ridge to the left of the pass.

Soon as the enemy observed this force, and before he had come within range of Washington's battery, the bugles sounded a halt. The advanced squadrons of the Mexican cavalry, on halting, had wheeled about, and fell back under the protection of the elevated ridge, while those in the rear, still pressing forward, came up rapidly, and formed upon the advance. Soon their compact and serried masses had accumulated to the number of several thousands, and with the bright gleaming of their polished lances, and their flags and scarlet pennons waving in the breeze, they presented a beautiful sight, as their ranks extended from the *arroyo*, half-way to the mountains on the left.

General Wool had disposed the troops in line of

battle, and directed each division to its particular position, to await further orders, when the fight should open. In this position our little army awaited the attack.

The enemy were in sight through the pass, as they filled the valley beyond. Santa Anna was evidently waiting for the rear column to move up, on to the main body. General Taylor, in the mean time, had returned from inspecting the works at Saltillo, and, as he rode along the line, was greeted with the most cheering demonstrations of the perfect confidence with which his presence inspired the troops. As cheer after cheer, and the prolonged and repeated huzzas of the brave volunteers rung out upon the mountains, and echo sent the sound rolling up the narrow pass, to the ears of the listening Mexicans, they began to imagine that they had to measure arms with other than panic-stricken and retreating foes.

General Wool also rode along the lines, and made a few pertinent remarks to the army. He reminded them of the day,—and that their country was expecting much of them. That theirs was a signal good fortune to be able to meet the enemy on this glorious natal day of the great man, whose memory was hallowed by every true American, and every lover of pure and exalted virtue,—that their country

had confided a sacred trust to their valor, and he had all confidence that the glory and honor of the American arms would receive a new lustre on this day. This address was responded to with three times three as hearty cheers as ever awakened the slumbering echoes of the old mountains, which on the morrow were to be aroused by the more awful echoes of the booming cannon and the bursting shell.

In the mean time the Mexican army had taken up their line of battle, in front, and, upon the crest of the mountain on our left, and at three o'clock in the afternoon, the ball was opened by the enemy firing a shell from his howitzer into the left of our lines.

Immediately afterwards our riflemen were engaged with Ampudia's light division, on the side of the mountain. Our men from behind the crest of the ridge, where they were covered, did terrible execution among the enemy, with their unerring weapons.

From this time till dark the light troops on either side were engaged in a distant discharge of small arms, with an occasional and scattered cannonading from the crest of the mountain in front, directed by the enemy upon our troops on the plateau. This constituted the action of the first day (22d)—the two armies not being regularly engaged on this day.

No more firing took place that night,—save a signal shell thrown into the air, to call off the light troops of the enemy, and an occasional exchange of shots between the piquets, and advanced patrols of the opposing armies.

Our loss on this day was very trifling—we having only four men wounded, and not a man killed,—while the Mexican loss was over three hundred in killed and wounded.

“Early in the day, General Miñon, with his brigade, had entered the valley east of Saltillo, as Santa Anna had anticipated; but the latter, finding General Taylor had made a stand, and was determined to offer him battle, sent directions to the former to remain in that quarter, and to fall upon us during our retreat before his overwhelming masses.

“In order the more certainly to insure that none of our army should escape, a thousand mounted rancheros, armed with lances and *machetes*, who had been collected at Monclova, Buenaventura, and Parras, and were commanded by Colonel Miguel Blanco, and Colonel Aguierra, were also sent from Patos, by a mule-path, leading through the mountains, into the same valley. While, therefore, General Miñon was to hover about the east side of the road leading from Saltillo to Monterey, along which, it was sup-

posed, we would soon be flying in great confusion, Colonels Blanco and Aguierra were to occupy the small town of Capellania, on the west, likewise to await our retreat, and to assist in cutting us up without quarter.''*

General Taylor, satisfied that the enemy did not intend to make the grand, and, as the Mexican General supposed, decisive attack, till the morrow,—and fearing that the forces in the rear of the town might make an effort to take our stores there—again returned to Saltillo with Colonel Charles May's squadron of the 2nd dragoons, and the Mississippi Rifles, as an escort.

On arriving there, the General made such arrangements as he supposed the emergency of the case required.

On the night of the 22nd, Santa Anna made a final address to his army. He referred to the wrongs which he said had been inflicted upon their country by the barbarians of the north; wrongs which could not be submitted to without eternal disgrace, and which could be redressed only by the last resort of nations. The United States of the North had, coward-like, presumed on their strength alone, and wantonly set at defiance every principle of right.

* Captain Carleton's History of Buena Vista.

They had provoked this war, under the cover of other objects to be gained, but really for their own aggrandizement, and the acquisition of territory clearly the property of the United States of the South. The one country aimed only at the entire destruction of the nationality of the other. He wished to call their whole attention to that single fact; and not only to that, but to a thousand others, which, like that, would make them burn to take terrible vengeance on the mercenary invaders of their soil. He called upon them to look upon their country. What met their sight? Its possessions wrested away; its dignity insulted; its fair fields ravaged; its citizens slaughtered; its hearths and homes made desolate. Others had gone forth to vindicate these wrongs, but they had fallen; and now their blood, which had drenched the fields of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Monterey, called on them, their brethren, with an eloquence that must reach their hearts, to avenge their death. He reminded them that they had crossed deserts, and suffered hunger, and thirst, and fatigue, without a murmur. Long and weary had been their march; but now they should be rewarded with repose, and the enjoyment of the abundance which filled the ample granaries of the murderers of their brethren. He concluded by saying that we were but a handful,

and at his mercy; that he had magnanimously offered to spare our lives, and even to treat us with consideration; but that we had vaingloriously rejected his clemency, leaving, as the only alternative, our utter extermination, without pity or quarter.*

“This address was received by loud cries of ‘*Viva Santanna,*’ ‘*Viva la República,*’ ‘*Libertad ó Muerte,*’ distinctly heard in our lines. After the shouting had ceased, Santa Anna’s own magnificent band commenced playing; and as the gentle breeze swept down the pass towards us, each delicious strain seemed to float upon it, mellowed by distance, yet distinct and inexpressibly sweet. For over half an hour it continued to delight our ‘barbarian ears’ with the exquisitely beautiful airs of the sunny south. When it had finished, and the last faint echo had sunk to rest, silence the most profound fell over the two armies like a pall. The huge mountains on either side reared their craggy heads high into the darkness above, and the pass itself seemed to lie between them in deep gloom and utter solitude. No one could realize that there were so many thousands of human beings gathered together in that narrow gorge. And it was a dreadful reflection that so many of them—now so full of life, and

* The substance of this address was repeated to us by Mexican officers who heard it.—CAPT. CARLETON.

ambition, and high aspirations; now visiting, in thought, their far-off homes, and the dear ones there; now the objects of pride and yearning solicitude; now the centre of deep affections, of sacred love, and of long-cherished hopes—would be stricken down in the full flush and vigor of manhood, and, ere another night should cast its dark mantle over the earth, would be numbered forever among the things that were.”*

During the night the camp was struck and stowed away in the wagons, which were carefully packed in the ravines and quarry-holes, in the rear of our lines. This precaution was necessary, not only to clear the field for the evolutions of the troops and artillery, but from prudence, in case we should be forced to fall back upon the town, that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy.

During the early part of the night, the weather continued pleasant, as it had been through the previous day; but, towards morning of the 23rd, the sky became overcast by heavy banks of clouds, while a cold rain began to fall, which proved excessively annoying to our men, who were forced to sleep upon their arms, with no other shelter than their threadbare blankets afforded them, and with-

* Capt. Carleton.

out fires, as material for the latter could not be found on the field. Those of the troops, however, who were posted on the side of the mountain, and who, being more exposed to the force of the storm, suffered more than their comrades on the plateau, had gathered together the dry clusters of the *nopal*, and other light plants growing in the crevices of the rocks, and kindled little fires. The enemy had also made fires along their line, up the side of the mountain—till, at length, two lines of lights were glimmering from the base half way up the side of the rocky ascent. The troops of both armies suffered greatly during this gloomy night—the Mexicans no less than our own men. “In our position,” says the Mexican engineer, in his report of the night’s operations, “we passed the night, which was absolutely infernal, owing to the cold, rain, and wind, which last almost amounted to a hurricane, while we had neither food nor fuel.”

CHAPTER XII.

Commencement of the Battle of the 23d.—Position of the Light Troops of the Enemy.—O'Brien's Battery.—Battle opens on the Left.—Plan of the Battle.—The 2nd Illinois Troops.—M'Culloch's Rangers.—The 3rd Indianians.—Kentucky and Arkansas Cavalry.—Our Riflemen engaged with Ampudia's Command.—The Mexican Line of Battle.—General Ortega.—The Mexican Eight-pounder Battery.—The Bearing of the Volunteers.—The Morning.—Beautiful Appearance of the Mexican Army.—The Unfaltering Coolness of the Americans.—General Lane.—The 2nd Indiana Regiment.—An Unequal Struggle.—“Cease firing and Retreat!”—Noble Conduct of O'Brien and his Men.—The Enemy advance up the Ravine.—Gallantry of the 2nd Illinoisians.—Colonel Bissell.—Contrast with the Arkansas Troops, who run on the First Fire.—The Retreating Indianians.—The Mississippians.—General Mora y Vilamil.—McKee's Kentuckians.—The Enemy continues to Advance.—Cols. Marshall and Yell.—Capt. Connor's Texians.—The “Old Man” returns from Saltillo, with the Mississippians.—Critical state of Affairs.—The Lion-hearted Riflemen.—Too much for the Enemy, who falls back.—Progress of the Battle in the Centre.—Santa Anna's Horse shot.—The Left Flank.—Struggle Doubtful.—Col. Charles May.—Mexican Cavalry Charge upon the Rancho of Buena Vista.—The 2nd Indianians do good Service.—General Torrijon.—Deaths of Colonel Yell and Captain Porter.—Second Charge of Mexican Cavalry.—They present a Beautiful Appearance.—Mutual Admiration.—Singular Conduct of the Lancers.—Their Rout.—The Fighting continues.—A Storm.—Driving the Enemy.—Turning the Tables.—Slaughter of the Mexicans.—The Mexican General sends a Flag.—Cannonading ceases on our part.—Enemy continues

to Fire on us.—Santa Anna's Object obtained.—The Progress of the Battle on the Plateau and in the Ravines.—Desperate Situation of the Kentucky and Illinois Troops.—Deaths of McKee, Clay, Hardin, and others.—O'Brien always a Hero.—Bragg's Battery.—Taylor in the Hottest of the Fight.—General Wool.—Enemy fall back.—“A little more Grape, Captain Bragg!”—Battalion of San Patricio.—Riley.—General Miñon attempts the City.—How repulsed.—Night approaches.—Firing ceases.—The Night.—Return of Day.—Victory! Victory!—Official Report of Killed and Wounded.

“Down the hills of Angostura still the storm of battle rolls;
 Blood is flowing, men are dying; God have mercy on their souls!
 Who is losing? who is winning?—over hill, and over plain,
 I see but smoke of cannon, clouding through the mountain rain.”

THE Battle of Buena Vista, or of La Angostura,* as it was called in the official report of the Mexican commander, commenced at the break of day, on the 23rd.

The action of the day previous amounted to but little more than skirmishing, to obtain positions, and was but preliminary to the grand affair about to come off.

In the night, the light troops of the enemy had attained a position to the left of our line, on the side of the mountain, and in the rear of the riflemen, who had encamped on the heights. Here the action commenced by a continued exchange of rifle and musket shots, until about sunrise, when a body of

* Literally—the Narrows.

Ampudia's command advanced down the mountain, under shelter of a deep ravine, and received a murderous fire from the howitzer under the command of Lieutenant O'Brien, who threw into them a shower of spherical case-shot, which, bursting in their midst, threw them into confusion. The firing on the mountain now ceased for a short time, while the enemy then busied themselves in getting to a higher position, and out of the range of those unwelcome missiles.

The battle being thus opened on the left, the centre of the line, along the plateau, were making their final dispositions to receive the assault threatened to the front.

On the extreme right of our line was placed Bragg's Battery, supported by the 2nd Kentuckians, under the command of the gallant Col. William R. McKee. It was in this regiment, also, that the lamented young Henry Clay served as lieutenant-colonel. Captain Washington's battery occupied, as it had the day before, the narrow Pass of La Angostura, while the 1st Illinois regiment, commanded by Colonel Hardin, supported it in the gullies, and on the ridge on the left.

No one can form a correct idea of the nature of the ground where this battle was fought, and the disadvantages under which the troops of both armies

made their evolutions, without reference to the accompanying plan of the battle. The mountains encompassed the small plateau, on which the main body of our forces were drawn up, and this was intersected by deep gorges, and ravines extending into the mountain on our left, and rendering the passage of artillery altogether impracticable.

A portion of the 2nd regiment of Illinoisians occupied a position on the plain, opposite one of these gorges, with a twelve-pound howitzer on their left, and in their rear our six-pounder guns. These pieces were a portion of Captain Sherman's battery, and were under the commands of Lieutenants French and Thomas.

Next after these, to the right, and a little in the rear, came first two companies of dragoons, then Mc'Culloch's Texas Rangers.

The 2nd Regiment of Indiana, under Colonel Bowles, were posted at the extreme left of the plain, having O'Brien's battery under their protection. The Third Regiment of Indiana (Colonel Lane's) were stationed in the rear of Washington's battery, on a spot of rising ground, which overlooked the road for a considerable distance beyond the "narrows," where had assembled, the day before, the advance body of the enemy's cavalry.

A portion of the Arkansas and Kentucky cavalry

had been dismounted; while those not detached to fight on foot remained in one of the ravines on the left, and at the foot of the mountain.

All the time that these troops were being posted in their respective positions, the riflemen on the side of the mountains were hotly engaged with the light troops of Ampudia, who were shot down in great numbers by the unerring rifles of our western backwoodsmen, who, deploying among the rocks and ravines, deliberately selected the Mexican officers as their targets.

On the part of the enemy, the first column of attack moved down the road, with the intention of carrying the Pass of La Angostura. This body was under the command of General Mora y Villamil, and consisted of the choicest troops of the Mexican army. This was the "*Guarda Costa de Tampico*," than which, a finer regiment was not seen on the field that day; the 12th Regiment, the Regiment of Engineers, the "*Fijo de Mejico*," and the "*Battalion de Puebla*."

The second column was made up of General Pacheco's division, joined by that of General Lombardini,—one being ordered to move directly across the ridge, on the left of their heavy battery; while the other should move up the principal gorge, and, coming together near the foot of the mountain,

were to unite, and force our left flank on the plain. The light troops of General Ampudia, who had occupied the mountain, and had engaged our rifles, were to constitute the third column of attack ; and, turning our extreme left, were to form a conjunction with the second division, and attack our little force in the rear.

A strong body of cavalry was attached to each of the two first columns ; and a twelve-pounder battery and howitzer were placed on the ridge looking northward along the road, and in range of the pass.

General Ortega had command of a large body of troops, as a *corps de reserve*, formed on the ground where the Mexican Commander-in-Chief had assembled his two front lines the evening before.

During all the time occupied by the two armies, for the above-described disposition of their forces, the eight-pounder battery of the enemy, stationed on the ridge opposite our left flank, and in rear of Ampudia's command, was pouring a destructive fire into our left wing. The right wing and centre, occupying the plateau, meantime standing quietly in position ; and, with the coolness and determination of well-seasoned veterans, were engaged in watching the evolutions of the enemy, with whom they were soon to be in deadly combat. The

features of every man along the line glowed with animation, at the prospect of the hand-to-hand struggle, which was that day to decide the fate of the entire American army along the whole line of operations, from the mouth of the Rio Grande to the spot on which they now stood with firm, undaunted tread. Not an eye quailed, nor a muscle trembled, save with eagerness to measure prowess with the countless hosts deploying before them. Along that little front of heroes, was not a man who would, at that moment, have changed positions with the lordliest millionaire of the land at home. Whatever may have been said of a portion of the 2nd Indiana Volunteers, by those who are disposed to judge unkindly of them, whatever invidious letter-writers may have written of the Arkansas Cavalry, there was not, at that moment, a coward's heart pulsating along that front of determined men.

The morning was calm and sunny, like a June morning of our northern homes. Not a cloud rested upon the mountains, or a mist upon the plains ;—the atmosphere was of that pure transparent ether, which is peculiar to the mountainous regions of the south, and seems to possess an exhilarating quality, imparting strength and buoyancy to the spirits, as well as force and energy to the animal powers.

As the Mexican forces moved to their positions, in the most perfect order, to the sound of the fife and drum, and with the coolness and precision of a holiday parade, an involuntary and simultaneous expression of admiration was heard through our ranks.

They, indeed, presented a magnificent spectacle, as the morning rays, now pouring down the mountain declivities, glinted on their polished lance-points and sabres, and reflected the sunlight, from rank to rank, as they advanced steadily over the uneven ground.

The cavalry troops were most superbly uniformed, and mounted on the choicest horses of the country. Each regiment was distinguished by the peculiar color of its horses; and as the scarlet pennons of the lancers floated on the morning breeze,—with the flags designating the different corps,—the picture was one that will be remembered to the latest hour by all who then beheld it.

The scene, with the huge, craggy mountains on either hand, frowning gloomily upon the narrow valley, where stood our little band of iron-nerved and brave-hearted men, awaiting, calmly and silently, the onset of this comparatively almost countless host; while up the mountain-side the crash—crash—of the rifles, and the rattle of musketry, intermingled with the thunder-tones of the

Mexican battery, reverberating from the deep defiles and the rocky steeps,—the shouting of the combatants, and the smoke of battle, is as vividly impressed upon the memories of those who took part in the incidents of that exciting day, as if they had occurred but yesterday.

At this time the infantry of General Pacheco had united with the division under the command of General Lombardini; and passing up one of the deep ravines had gained a position up the side of the mountain, and near the eight-pounder battery. The cavalry attached to this column had, in the mean time, remained behind, under cover.

General Lane, who was in command at the left,—General Wool having just gone down to La Angostura to make provisions for an attack, which had been threatened that point, by the column under Mora y Villamil,—now sent forward Lieutenant O'Brien, with his three pieces of artillery, supported by the 2nd Indiana Regiment. This command turned the head of the ravine, and halted over two hundred yards in advance of all the other forces. The battery here being placed in position, the Indianians, moving in columns of companies, deployed into line on the left of it,—their front facing obliquely to the road on the west.

These troops had hardly formed their line, when

the enemy opened upon them a galling fire of musketry,—the distance between the opposing forces being less than two hundred yards, and the Mexicans outnumbering the Indianians by *more than ten to one*.

But the guns of the gallant O'Brien swept them down by hundreds. In the mean time, the command of General Lane was exposed to the range of the Mexican eight-pounders on the left,—every shot thinning out his ranks.

This unequal struggle was continued for very near half an hour. The front lines of Pacheco's division were frequently broken and thrown into confusion; but by his superior numbers, the Mexican general was able to move forward fresh platoons, as fast as they were shot down by the grape and canister from O'Brien's battery.

Being anxious to get out of the range of the eight-pound battery, which was doing his troops much damage, General Lane wished to advance further down the ridge, with a view of gaining a safer position, and at the same time of driving the Mexicans lower down into the ravine. O'Brien was ordered to advance some sixty or seventy yards, to the front and right. This order he promptly obeyed, and, placing his pieces in battery, again renewed the work of death.*

* Captain Carleton.

The General was now on the left of the 2nd Indiana Regiment, which were to advance to the support of the artillery. At this important moment, —without authority from the general, who had not yet the most distant thought of retiring,—Colonel Bowles, who commanded the regiment, gave that unfortunate order, which covered himself and his heretofore gallant regiment with disgrace, and the chagrin and mortification of which, a few months afterwards, hastened the premature death of that unhappy officer. The order was—“ *Cease firing and retreat!*” One by one the companies broke from the line and, in the utmost confusion, retreated; leaving the brave O’Brien alone with his guns, and, single-handed, to keep at bay the hosts of Mexican infantry. He and his men stood their ground for several minutes, and fought like wounded tigers,—throwing two canisters at a time into a gun, and defiantly hurling the leaden showers into the ranks of the enemy,—sending scores and hundreds to their long homes. But the overwhelming masses of the Mexicans swept like a torrent through the ravine,—the rear ranks forcing onward those in front, as the waves of the ocean, lashed by the tornado, drive the advancing waves upon the shore. The men and horses attached to the guns were being cut to pieces; and O’Brien was forced to limber up and

fall back with two of them, leaving the four-pounder in the possession of the enemy, as every man and horse belonging to that gun had been shot down.

The enemy, now no longer held at bay by O'Brien's battery, poured out upon the plateau, and pursued the retreating Indianians as they rushed precipitately towards the rear.

The 2nd Illinoisians and 1st Dragoons, with two pieces of artillery, were alone opposed to this overwhelming mass. These brave troops did much execution amongst the advancing ranks; but as they were but a handful against a host of the best forces of the enemy, the latter still advanced till they had gained a point to the left of the 2nd Illinoisians, between them and our friends, on the side of the mountain, and in their rear. In the mean time, the Dragoons, being of no service opposed to this vast multitude of mixed infantry and cavalry, had been withdrawn to the rear of a ravine, as was also M'Culloch's Texas Rangers; and the battalion of the 2nd Illinoisians, with Sherman's battery, were exposed to a fire from the left, front, and rear, at the same instant.

Most nobly did these troops behave under this trying circumstance. Finding themselves surrounded, or nearly so, "Col. Bissell having directed the signal, 'cease firing,' to be made, gave the com-

mand—‘*Face to the rear! Battalion, about FACE! —Battalion, forward march!*’ which was executed; until the danger of being outflanked was past.”* All this was done with the coolness and regularity of a holiday parade, and greatly in contrast to the conduct of the Arkansas Volunteers, who had been dismounted and stationed in this part of the field when the action first commenced. These fellows (four companies) took to their heels on the first fire from the enemy, nor stopped to look behind them until they had cleared the field, where they, with a few exceptions, were not seen again during the entire day.

The retreating Indianians were leaving the field, supposing that the day was lost, when they were arrested by a number of regular officers, who endeavored to rally them. Some two or three hundred were induced to return, and afterwards did good and important service. Col. Bowles, their commanding-officer, picked up the rifle of a dead Mississippian, and joined that heroic corps as a private. It was an honor to have served in that regiment, that the *command* of almost any other regiment did not confer. History will ever award to that small force of Southern riflemen the reputation they so heroically won on that day.

* Capt. Carleton.

While the 2nd Illinoisians were thus contending, General Mora y Villamil, in command of the first column, had moved up in range of our battery at La Angostura, and Captain Washington had received him with a terrible shower of grape, canister, and round-shot, which broke the Mexican ranks, and drove them in confusion to seek the shelter of the great ravine, and the mountain spurs on their right. This force consisted of over 4,000 of the very select troops of the Mexican army, and were driven back by artillery alone.

M'Kee's Regiment of 2nd Kentuckians had been ordered to move up from their position on the other side of the stream, to the support of Captain Sherman's battery, which had taken position near the head of the first gorge. Captain Bragg also joined Sherman's battery, by bringing his pieces on to the right of the latter.

* We had now a line of artillery extending from the road, partly across the plateau, supported by the Illinoisians of Bissell's command, M'Kee's Regiment, the 1st Dragoons, and a battalion of Hardin's Illinoisians.

In the mean time, the enemy had passed over the whole plateau, and were now between us and the base of the mountains. They received the whole fire of our artillery and the infantry, and bravely

stood their ground, notwithstanding we were making dreadful havoc in their ranks.

All this while, the Mexican cavalry poured rapidly along at the base of the mountain, and in the rear of their infantry, in hot pursuit of the panic-stricken Indianians. Ampudia's light troops, who had been contending with our riflemen on the slope, falling in with the lancers, joined in the pursuit; thus cutting off the latter from communication with our main body.

The Kentucky cavalry, under Col. Marshall, and the remaining portion of the Arkansas cavalry, under Col. Yell, held this advancing body of the Mexicans at bay for a moment, while the riflemen endeavored to unite with their friends. But the Mexicans were too numerous for them long to withstand, and cavalry, riflemen, and all were forced to retire. The riflemen suffered greatly, as did, also, the Texians of Capt. Conner, who were nearly destroyed.

The enemy had now forced our left flank, and was rapidly moving round to our rear. They had every advantage, and we were virtually whipped by the force of overwhelming numbers. This was the situation of the game, when the word flew through the ranks of our exhausted, but not disheartened, volunteers, that the "*Old Man*" was returning from Saltillo.

There was a magic in the name of our old General; and when he appeared in sight, accompanied by the *Mississippians* and a few dragoons, the cry rang forth, from one party of volunteers to another,—“*Here comes the Old Man! hurrah for Rough and Ready!*” And, inspired with new energy and hope, they were ready to be led again into the hottest of the fight.

The General, perceiving, at one glance of his eagle eye, the state of affairs, directed Col. Davis with his regiment to proceed obliquely across the field, from the hacienda of Buena Vista, towards the point where the enemy were working round the base of the mountain. Ampudia's infantry, with a large force of cavalry, were here engaged by the handful of lion-hearted *Mississippians*, who fought like devils,—but, at the same time, with perfect coolness and calculation. They waited till the Mexicans “showed the whites of their eyes,”—when they poured into them such volleys of death-dealing rifle-balls, as mowed them down like dry prairie-grass before the flames. Still on they pressed, rank upon rank; and still this little band of heroes stood manfully to their work,—till, at length, the hosts began to waver and reel before the deadly fire of the rifles—and at length broke, and in dismay fled back to the ravines.

All this time the Mexican lancers were moving at the base of the hills, and on our left, till they had succeeded in getting further in our rear, and were bearing down towards the rancho.

General Taylor, on observing this, sent forward Col. May, with a force made up of dragoons and volunteer cavalry, to check them. This force succeeded in arresting the enemy, and forcing them back to the mountains.

While all this was going on, at the left, and in the rear, the great centre of the battle was progressing on the plateau, under the immediate supervision of the two opposing commanders. Our artillery was rapidly thinning the Mexican ranks, and at length the centre was driven back under cover of the ravine in front. At this point, Santa Anna's horse was shot from under him.

The left flank was now becoming the theatre of the hottest part of the battle, the centre moving along under cover of the ravines to the support of their right wing at that point;—the artillery in the centre of our line, in the mean time, being engaged, not only with the front of the enemy, but also upon their masses threatening our left and rear.

“For a long while the conflict was continued without any decided success on the part of either army; and the whole field, during this period,

might be compared to an intricate game of chess, the pass at La Angostura, defended by Washington, being the key to our position. If this was carried, we were irretrievably checkmated, and the game was lost.”*

Artillery being brought to bear upon the masses on our left, and moving upon our rear, they at length began to give ground, and General Taylor ordered Col. Charles May to pass up the ravine in the rear of the plateau, and intercept a portion of the enemy, who were endeavoring to regain the main body. May had scarcely started in obedience to this order, when a brigade of the Mexican lancers, which had crossed the broken ground between it and the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry, and had forced the latter to fall back, made a charge upon our baggage-train in the road, a short distance north of the rancho. May was, accordingly, recalled to repel this attack with his dragoons, and such of Pike's squadron as remained on the field,—with Lieut. Reynolds with two pieces of artillery. But before this force reached the spot, the enemy's cavalry, in columns of squadrons, charged upon the Arkansas and Kentucky mounted volunteers, in front of the rancho. The struggle was a hand-to-

* Carleton.

hand affair;—the two parties being so completely mixed up, and confused in the cloud of dust blown towards the rancho, that it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe.

It was now that some two or three hundred of the 2nd Indianians, who had been rallied, and had taken a stand in the yard and buildings of the rancho, proved of important service. They poured a most destructive fire into the Mexicans, which broke their ranks. One half, mixed up with the Americans, rushed headlong through the buildings; while the other retreated to the mountains on our left, followed by Lieutenant Reynolds, who gave them a few parting shots, till out of range.

This was General Torrejon's command, made up of the flower of the Mexican army, and was one thousand strong; while the volunteers opposed to them was about four hundred and fifty.

Here fell the gallant Yell, and by his side Captain Porter,—both in advance of their men,—and Adjutant Vaughn, of Kentucky. The latter brave officer received twenty-four wounds. With these officers fell many of the best men of the two regiments.

Torrejon left thirty-five of his men dead, and was himself wounded. He was a brave officer and made a most gallant charge.

The Mexicans, being determined, if possible, to

reach the road leading to the city, again made the attempt with a fresh brigade of cavalry. This force charged down the plateau from the foot of the mountains, directing their course to the point occupied by the remnant of the 2nd Indianians, the 3d Indianians, and the Mississippians.

The last-named troops reached across the plain in line of battle, with the Indianians on their right, their front towards the mountains, and their line along the ravine; thus forming a figure resembling the Greek *delta*, with the opening presented to the enemy.

In most gallant order the Mexicans came down at a round gallop. They were formed in column of squadrons, fifteen hundred strong, of the bravest and best disciplined of the entire Mexican army. It was a beautiful sight, as they poured over the field; the sun shining on their polished armor, and glistening from lance-points and sabre-blades; their pennons and insignia waving upon the breeze, and the bugle-notes floating in mellow tones upon the air.

As they approached nearer to the little line of Spartans, who had thrown themselves across their path, to barricade their passage, they slackened their gait to a hand-gallop, hoping to draw their fire. But in this they were mistaken. Our men were not inclined to waste a shot, but meant that

each one should empty a saddle. Still nearer came the enemy, and now they had drawn rein to a walk,—the two opposing forces gazing upon each other with admiration,—the Americans, upon the gorgeous array and beautiful order of their foes; and the Mexicans, on the little line of undaunted heroes, who walled up the way before them, like an immovable wall of granite.

Involuntary exclamations of admiration ran along our ranks, on the nearer approach of the cavalry.

“Don’t they look too pretty to shoot,” said a Mississippian to his rankman.

“Yes,” was the reply, “’tis a pity to spoil such beautiful uniforms.”

“Look at that gallant officer leading them on,” said another; “he’s too noble looking a fellow for me to kill.”

Instead of now charging in double quick time, upon our handful of men, the Mexicans actually came to a dead halt, in the very cross-fire range of their two lines. Now it was that each man, deliberately selecting his mark, awaited the order to fire; and, when that order was given, a simultaneous sheet of fire blazed from the two lines,—hurling death and carnage into the reeling ranks of the enemy, whose entire front column was laid pros-

trate. Riderless horses rushed right and left, and sped away over the plain in every direction.

This reception threw the Mexicans into confusion ; and Sherman, moving up at this time, and throwing into them grape and canister, completed the rout.

It remains to this day inexplicable, why the Mexicans committed the before unheard of error of halting in their advance upon our little line. Had they come down at a rapid charge, our friends could not have withstood the weight of their heavy force. Our lines would have been broken ; the Mexicans would have gained the road, and have got possession of the city, with all our stores ; and the result would have been disastrous in the extreme.

While this charge was being made, and repulsed, as above described, the fighting was continued in other parts of the field. The enemy still occupied the ground they had held for several hours, on our left flank ;—and the General directed Colonel May, with the regiments of Cols. Davis and Lane, Pike's and Preston's Arkansas Cavalry companies, the 1st and 2nd Dragoons, and Sherman's battery, now to attack the enemy at that point. They were soon driven further back towards the base of the hills, and in the direction of their main body.

It was now about three o'clock, and a tremendous storm, which had been gathering for some time,

burst over the field. Powerful gusts of wind came sweeping down through the mountain gorges, bearing along with them a tempest of hail and rain ;—while the bursting peals of thunder, and the vivid flashings of lightning, mingling with the roar of artillery—the crashing of rifles and musketry, together with the shouts and yelling of the combatants,—and the smoke of the battle, all combined—formed a union of sights and sounds terrifically sublime. The old mountains trembled to their centres, and the frowning clouds strove to veil the bloody scene from the eye of heaven.

Still the gallant force under May swept over the field, driving the enemy before them, while our artillery was playing hotly upon the retiring Mexicans, from different points of the plateau.

“They swept onwards towards the mountains like a seine, and gathered this portion of the enemy’s force into a sort of *cul-de-sac*, from which it seemed impossible for it to escape. The Mexicans, who were thus hemmed in, were played upon by no less than nine pieces of our light artillery, at the same moment ; being the centre of a cross-fire from Reynold’s pieces to their right, and O’Brien’s and Thomas’s pieces on their left, while Sherman and Bragg were tearing them up in front. Although at first they answered our troops by a fire of musketry,

as the ground, from point to point, afforded them cover, yet, as they became more condensed, and the effect of our shot more destructive, they grew panic-stricken. Then horse and foot, mingled together, and, without pausing to resist the storm under which they suffered, pressed on, closer and closer towards the mountains.

“These were the men who had killed our wounded, when they drove us in the morning. These were the men who took no prisoners when they might have taken many. These were the men who left no sign of life in anything American, which had fallen into their hands,—the men who had stripped our poor fellows, and then stood over them, and mutilated their remains in the most horrible and revolting manner. They were the men who had received the surrendered sword of the Texan Lieutenant Campbell—a gallant gentleman—and then plunged it into his bosom. These were the men who in the morning had surrounded that gray-haired man, Lieut. Price, of Illinois, seventy-two years old, and cruelly forced their lances through him, as if for pastime.

“Now they were going back over the same ground where all this had been done. We had but little consideration for those who had had no pity for our mangled and bleeding comrades. And every one

knew if the battle finally went against us, what would inevitably be his own fate.

“All these things inspired our troops with a determination never to despair of victory; and nerved them to push on, to the punishment of an enemy, who, in civilized warfare, had set the first example of murdering wounded men.

“Faster and faster our troops gathered them into that little cove, in the side of the mountain.

“They were about 5,000, or 6,000 in all; cavalry and infantry, mingled in confusion;—an armed multitude;—a mere chaos of men and horses, and dead and dying, with flags, pennons, lances, and muskets, all mixed up. Hundreds of them endeavored to escape by clambering up the steep sides of the mountains; but most of them stood huddled together, while our shot went crashing through them, and our shells likewise, opening for themselves a bloody circle wherever they exploded.”*

This was the condition of things when the Mexican commander, seeing the desperate situation of his right wing, sent a white flag to our general, with the extraordinary request to know “*what he wanted?*” This was only a *ruse de guerre* on the part of Santa Anna, whose object was to divert our

* Captain Carleton's History of the Battle of Buena Vista.

attention, and cause us to suspend our fire, until those troops could escape from their dangerous position.

General Taylor gave orders for the cannonading to cease, while the Mexicans, disregarding their own flag, continued, dishonorably, to pour into us the fire from their eighteen and twenty-four-pounder battery.

General Wool, who was the bearer of the flag on our part, seeing this, would not hold an interview with the Mexican officer, but, putting an end abruptly to the parley, returned to our lines.

During this time, however, the Mexican general had accomplished all he had anticipated from the ruse, as the troops, who had suffered so much on our left, had profited by the occasion, and made good their retreat to their main body in our front.

The battle was now principally concentrated upon the plateau and the ravines in front, where a force of over 12,000 infantry and lancers were brought in contact with the troops of Illinois and Kentucky, under those brave and noble men, Colonels Hardin, M'Kee, and Bissell. These troops, but a handful, to an immense army, were necessarily forced to fall back, and seek the protection of one of the ravines. The overwhelming masses of the enemy rushed down upon them, and notwithstand-

ing our artillery was literally mowing them down by platoons, still they pressed onward, and occupying both sides, and the rear of the ravine, poured a murderous fire upon our troops, who were now completely pent up in it. They were being shot down by scores—the enemy killing in mere wantonness, while our poor fellows, from the narrowness of the gorge, and the steep sides, were unable to return their fire with any effect. Their situation was most desperate, when Washington rushed to their rescue, with his battery, and, forcing the lancers from between him and our friends, opened the passage for them to the road. The gorge was filled with our dead—*all* dead, as the blood-thirsty devils give no quarter to the wounded and dying. They murder for the fiendish love of blood.

It was here fell those gallant-hearted,—best of men,—those heroic champions, who have added honor and lustre to the American name; men whose names will be remembered as long as history endures,—M'Kee,* Hardin, Clay, Willis, Zabriskie,

* Colonel M'Kee was stationed some time with me at Cerralvo, where he relieved the two companies of Mississippians. I had an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with him. He was a most amiable and courteous gentleman; and, perhaps, no commanding-officer was so universally beloved by his men as he was.

He was one of those rare and peculiar characters, with whom but few individuals can come in contact, without forming an involuntary

Haughton, and a host of other noble spirits,—a priceless holocaust upon the altar of patriotism.

The forces fighting on our left, having driven the enemy, with whom they had been engaged, now hastened to the assistance of the handful, contending in front, and soon the battle became most terrific at this point.

There was no cessation, or interval in the firing, but one continuous, uninterrupted roaring of artillery, belching of flame and smoke, and rushing and whirring of iron and leaden destructives. It was the most desperate struggle of the whole live-long day. O'Brien fought his guns, unsupported, till every horse and man was shot down, as before, in the earlier part of the day. He again kept the enemy at bay, till the forces in the rear could hurry up, when, not being able to limber up his pieces,

attachment. With the dignity and true manliness of an officer of rank, he possessed the gentleness and affection of a woman, and the social qualities of a gentleman of refined education.

I can assert, with confidence, that, among the noble spirits who fell during that day, there was not one for whom so many manly cheeks were wet.

M'Kee and young Henry Clay,—when their regiment was entire, —messed together, generally occupying the same tent. They were accompanied each by a favorite negro servant. A melancholy fatality attended this entire mess; the boys did not long survive the deaths of their kind masters; one being murdered by the Mexicans, in the streets of Saltillo, the day after the battle, and the other, I think, fell on the field fighting by his master's side.

for the want of men, he was forced to lose them; not, however, till he had several times, almost single-handed, disgorged their contents of lead and iron into the very teeth of the advancing Mexicans.

Now it was that Bragg's battery came up, and opened upon the enemy. He, too, was without support—for there was none to give him. He was ordered to "*maintain the position at every hazard.*" Soon he was joined by Sherman,—who immediately opened upon the Mexicans. They were now supported by the dragoons. Now Washington opened again from La Angostura, and the troops, which had come down from the left, poured a leaden shower into the ranks of the enemy, who was now enfiladed from right to left.

"The Mexicans fought as they had never fought before, and with an utter disregard of life. Our men were falling on every hand. General Taylor himself was in the midst of the hottest of the fight, calmly giving his orders, his clothes torn and riddled with bullets; and wherever the fury of the battle was greatest, there was General Wool, riding from point to point, encouraging and stimulating the men to still greater exertions. Each moment our fire seemed to grow more and more destructive. At length, the head of the Mexican column began to fall back; not by retreating, but by being shot

away. Others pressed on to supply the places of the fallen; but they, too, went down. Finding it utterly impossible, notwithstanding all were advancing, to gain even a rod of ground against such a tempest, the whole column finally faltered a moment, then gave way, and in confusion retreated to the cover of the deep ravine. Not till then did our fire slacken. The smoke, which had enveloped the two armies like a thick veil, then slowly lifted up,—and there was the field, blue with the uniforms of the dead.”*

The Mexican forces had now given ground before the plunging and deadly fire of our artillery, and the rifles of the Mississippians and Illinoisans. The battery of heavy guns still remained playing upon us, from the head of the plateau.

Now was the time that Captain Bragg advanced and gave them a “*little more grape*.” His battery was the same that had done such essential service at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, under the command of the lamented Ringgold. Afterwards at Monterey it again proved its value under charge of Randolph Ridgely;—and, when that promising young officer was accidentally killed by the fall of his horse, the guns were passed over to Captain Bragg;

* Captain Carleton.

—each time they changed commanders, falling into the hands of those who were most competent to receive them.

This battery was brought to bear upon the heavy guns of the battalion of San Patricio, which had maintained its position since morning.

This battalion was made up of Irish deserters from our army, under the command of a fellow named Riley. He had belonged to Ringgold's, now Bragg's battery, and being a Catholic, was induced to desert his colors, and went over to the enemy, a few days previous to the battle of Palo Alto. He was immediately given a battery, with a party of his own countrymen to man it. They were all deserters;—and this company, thus organized, formed the nucleus of Saint Patrick's battalion,—a gang of desperate cut-throats, about sixty of whom afterwards met the fate they so richly deserved;—they were hung at Chapultepec, by order of General Scott.

Riley, having deserted before actual hostilities had commenced, could not, in strict accordance with the regulations, be put to death. But his punishment was greater. He was branded with the letter "D" upon his brow, and retained a prisoner with the army, where he was exposed to all the contumely and insult of his indignant countrymen,

who had proved true to the country of their adoption.

A short time previous to his desertion, Riley had been punished slightly, for some disobedience of orders, by his captain, and this is said to have been one cause of his desertion. He must have been of a most malicious and revengeful disposition; for it was this man who, at the battle of Palo Alto, too skillfully directed the piece that killed his old commander.

It was now late in the afternoon, and the firing began to slacken, from sheer exhaustion of the combatants. Now, our attention was directed to the rear, by the sound of heavy cannonading in that direction.

General Miñon had attempted to get round towards the road, between us and Saltillo. He had been ordered by Santa Anna to remain on the east of the city, to be in readiness to massacre our retreating columns, when we should give way before his victorious masses. But being weary of idleness,—not having his part of the programme to perform,—he had taken the responsibility upon himself, and moved forward, towards the hacienda of Buena Vista.

Here he was met by Webster's battery, and was soon driven back to his former position.

The gallant Lieutenants Bowen, Donaldson, and Shover, and other officers who had been detailed on duty in the town, not content with merely driving Miñon back to the point he had occupied all day, now determined to drive him entirely from the valley; and in this they succeeded, by one of the most daring and gallant feats of the day.

Night was now approaching, and gradually the firing ceased. One or two of the heavy pieces of the Irish Battalion kept up a sullen cannonading at intervals. They had stood their ground with a dogged bravery all day, and at night were not content with the havoc they had made in our little ranks. But even their endurance, at length, failed them, and when the cold shadows of night fell over the field, and the dreadful objects which were strewn over it, a silence, as of death, prevailed.

“Sink, oh night, among thy mountains! let the cool, gray shadows
fall;

Dying brothers, fighting demons, drop thy curtain over all!

Through the thickening winter twilight, wide apart the battle
rolled,

In its sheath the sabre rested, and the cannon's lips grew cold.”

Neither army had retired from the ground, but our little band of heroes remained upon the plateau they had so nobly maintained, while the enemy had been driven to the rear of their first position.

“The night was a cold and gloomy one, and sad was the duty that now devolved upon our worn-out men;—the collecting of our wounded, and conveying them to the cathedral, and other temporary hospitals in the city. These amounted to near 400, while the number of our poor fellows, whose stiff and stark remains were filling up the ravines, and strewn over the bloody plain,—mixed confusedly with the dark, swarthy forms of their foes—were almost 300. The loss of the enemy was 2,500, in killed and wounded—and 4,000 missing.”*

“At length, the long hours of night had worn slowly away. Just before day, the moon went down. Soon afterward, the gray, and then the purple streaks of morning began to lighten up the eastern sky, and the stars, one by one, to melt into the blue of heaven. Gradually the surrounding objects became more and more distinct, as the day approached. Then it was that a sound went along our lines, ever to be remembered. It was but a single cry at first, then a murmur which rose and swelled upon the ear like the voice of a tempest; then a prolonged and thrilling shout:

“‘*Victory! VICTORY! VICTORY! The enemy has fled! The field is ours!*’”

* Inspector-General Churchill.

“Reader! you should have heard the wild hurrah that then rang throughout that Pass—the long, exultant, American “*Hurrah!*” Even the old mountains themselves turned traitors for the moment, and yelled to their hoarse echoes to repeat it. Again, and again, it sounded, and right over the inanimate remains of the gallant men who had poured out their blood, and yielded up their lives to win this new glory for their country.

“And then, with mingled feelings of sorrow for the dead, joy for the victory, and gratitude to God, many a strong heart was moved; the big drops trickled down many a rough and powder-blackened face; and stern, brave men, whose eyes, for many a long day, had not known the refreshing moisture of tears, wept now,—even while they shouted in triumph. And it was so;—the heavy masses of the Mexican army, which, when the night shut down, extended along our front, from the stream to the mountains, were nowhere to be seen, when the coming day had again lit up the Pass. Silently, and almost as unaccountably, as the phantoms of a vision, they had gone away. But, in the twenty-five hundred dead and wounded men, whom they had left behind, and who would not vanish with the darkness, we had melancholy evidence that their having been before us, and struggled with us for two long

days, were something more real than the flitting vagaries of a dream.”*

The Mexicans had retreated under cover of the darkness,—strewing the roads, over which they fled, with the arms and accoutrements of the battle-wearied men, and the wounded and dying, they had hastily gathered from the field. For leagues, the track of their hurried retreat was traced by the trappings and clothing which, incommoding their march, were cast from them.

And this was the end of the battle of Buena Vista, which Santa Anna had opened with so much hope and assurance.

* Capt. Carleton.

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.



FOUGHT
FEBRUARY 22nd & 23rd
1847.

LEGEND.

-  Position of General Taylor and Staff on the 23rd.
- A. First column of attack of General Mora y Villamil.
 - B. General Lombardini's Division.
 - C. General Pacheco's Division.
 - D. Side of mountain on our left occupied by the light troops of Ampudia.
 - E. Position of American Riflemen.
 - F. The Mexican Eight-pounder Battery.
 - G. Broad Ravine in front.
 - H. Position of 2nd Indianians before they retreated.
 - I. The 4 companies Arkansas Troops, from whence they retreated.
 - J. Bragg's Battery and M'Kee's Kentuckians.
 - L. First Gorge.
 - M. Second Gorge.
 - N. Third Gorge.
 - O. The 2nd Illinoisians.
 - P. Two pieces of Sherman's Battery.
 - Q. Two companies 1st Dragoons.
 - R. Kentucky and Arkansas Cavalry.
 - S. La Angostura.
 - T. Rancho of Buena Vista.
 - U. Deep, impassable Gullies.
 - V. M'Culloch's Texas Rangers.
 - W. High tongue of land uniting Angostura with the plateau.
 - Y. The American Encampment.
 - Z. O'Brien's Battery and 2nd Indianians at daybreak, 23rd.
 - 1. High ridge between the first divisions of the two armies.
 - 2. Ravine in rear of plateau.
 - 3. Colonel Lane's 3rd Indianians.
 - 4. 4. 4. 4. 4. 4. 4. The line of advance of the Enemy around our left flank, and in our rear.
 - 5. Corps de reserve of General Ortega.

REPORT
OF THE
KILLED, WOUNDED, AND MISSING,
OF THE
22nd and 23rd FEBRUARY.
(From Official Returns.)

REGULARS.

CORPS.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Aggregate	Strength went into Battle.	Loss, one out of
General Staff, A. A. Gen. Lincoln,	1			1		
Corps Engineers,		1		1		
3rd Artillery, 2 Companies,	1	19		20	150	7-5
4th Artillery, 1 Company,	6	22		28	117	4-18
1st Dragoons, 2 Companies,		9		9	133	14-78
2nd Dragoons, 2 Companies,		2		2	76	38
Total of Regulars,	8	53		61	476	

VOLUNTEERS.

CORPS.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Aggregate	Strength went into Battle.	Loss, one out of
Brigadier General Lane,		1		1		
Arkansas Mounted Regiment, (Col. Yell),	18	23	1	42	479	11-4
1st Kentucky Mounted Reg't., (Col. Marshall), ..	28	22		50	330	6-6
2nd Kentucky Foot Regiment, (Col. McKee),	44	43		87	571	6-56
1st Illinois Foot Regiment, (Col. Hardin),	29	16		45	580	12-89
2nd Illinois Foot Regiment, (Col. Bissell),	47	66	2	115	573	4-93
Texas Company, Foot, (Capt. Conner),	15	1		16	61	3-81
2nd Indiana Foot Regiment, (Col. Bowles),	34	67	1	102	627	6-13
3rd Indiana Foot Regiment, (Col. Lane),	9	40		49	626	12-77
1st Mississippi Foot Regiment, (Col. Davis), ..	40	56	2	93	368	3-75
Total of Volunteers,	264	335	6	605	4 215	
Total of Regulars, and Volunteers,	272	388	6	606	4,691	

CHAPTER XIII.

Major Giddings in command of Escort.—Mr. Crittenden.—Captain Kenneally.—Bradley.—Kenneally's "Boys."—His Promotion.—His Death at Rio Frio.—Bradley's Men.—The Kentuckians.—The March.—An Incident.—Chile con Carne.—The Train.—Approach to Cerralvo.—Charge of the Lancers.—Kenneally.—Characteristic Incident.—"Dinero! Dinero!"—An Unlucky Cigarrito.—Infernal Machines.—Loss of the Enemy.

THERE were many amusing, and sometimes tragical occurrences, which at the moment they happened, and perhaps a few days after, at the bivouac, and around our camp-fires, excited us to mirth, or caused feelings of sadness; but which, amidst the stirring incidents of those exciting times, were soon overlooked, and only brought to mind among the quiet scenes of home, long after the turbulent sounds of war had died upon the ear.

The affair which occurs to my mind, as I now resume my pen, and which I will relate, is one of a serio-comical character; for, while certain acts of the drama furnished amusement to one party of us, who were interested lookers-on, its results to the other party were anything but comical.

It was early in the month of March, but a few days subsequent to the glorious day of Buena Vista, and while all the country between Monterey and Matamoras was yet invested by parties of the enemy's troops, that Major Giddings, of the 1st Regiment of Ohio Volunteers, was ordered to escort a train of wagons to and from Camargo, which was still the chief dépôt of our division of the army.

Accompanying this escort was Mr. Crittenden, of Kentucky, who had been selected by General Taylor as the bearer of his official report of the battle of the 22nd and 23rd.

The detachment under Major Giddings consisted of two companies of his own regiment,—Captains Kenneally's and Bradley's,—and three companies of the 1st Kentucky Infantry. Kenneally was a young Emerald, with an Irish company. A braver little fellow never drew blade; nor did a braver and more reckless, rollicking set of "boys" than he commanded ever shoulder firelocks on the battle-fields of Mexico.

Kenneally had been promoted from a low non-commissioned rank in his company, grade by grade, in rapid succession, to its command. This quick promotion had been conferred upon him meritoriously for his acts of daring bravery. Alas! poor fellow! he afterwards, in a fit of despondency, at

Rio Frio, and while under the command of General Scott, threw himself upon the point of his own sword, and, hero to the last, died like a Roman.

Bradley was also in command of a fine set of fighting fellows; and with the exception of their captain, the entire company had been tried in the storming of Monterey. Bradley himself had obtained leave of absence, just before the advance of the army upon that place, and had returned only in time to enjoy the results of the victory. His courage, however, had been tested in the patriot war of Canada, and, therefore, I suppose, cannot be questioned.

The Kentuckians were a portion of Colonel Rogers' fine regiment, and a better body of troops were not in the volunteer forces.

With this command, Major Giddings left the camp of "Santiago," escorting a train of one hundred and fifty wagons.

During the first day's march, but a few incidents occurred, save an occasional exchange of shots, between our advanced vedettes and small reconnoitering parties of the enemy.

At Ramos,—one of our usual camping-grounds for the night,—we suddenly came upon one of these parties of Lancers, who, seated around their fires, were in the act of taking their suppers.

Our unexpected arrival somewhat interrupted their arrangements,—so much so, that they immediately took to the cover of the chaparral, without so much as untethering their horses, which, of course, fell into our hands.

But what was most interesting to our hungry fellows, of all the camp equipage they left behind, were their steaming pots of *chile con carne*, which, in their hurry to “*vamos*,” they had left upon the embers. Upon the ground were spread their *serapes*, as they had thrown themselves upon them before their fires. Even their carbines, lances, sabres, and pistols were scattered upon the ground, as they had carelessly thrown them from them, on their first arrival. They had also neglected to place a guard around the camp, and we had thus come upon them unawares.

As our men were greedily feasting upon their *chile con carne*, we were much amused by a sudden assault upon them, of a party of women, who, thoughtful of the flesh-pots, had desperately returned to the camp, and, in spite of all the efforts of the men to prevent them, rescued from a squad, who had gathered around the savory mess, each a vessel, and again disappeared in the chaparral.

These Mexican troops seldom move without a crowd of women accompanying them.

The men, who were thus unceremoniously cheated out of their suppers, soon consoled themselves, with the fun we all derived from the incident; and in an hour or two all was forgotten, in the sound sleep that a hard day's march brings to the weary soldier. All, save the guard on duty, were wrapped in their blankets by the same fires that the Mexicans had kindled for their own repose. No doubt, the poor yellow-skins that night, as they picked their way supperless through the prickly pears and thorny chaparral, *thought*,—if they did not quote Latin,—*Alas! "sic transit gloria!"*

We were rarely out of sight of scouting parties of Mexicans. They looked with longing eyes upon the long array of wagons which, reaching for miles, might be seen from the eminences, like a monstrous serpent, winding its gigantic length slowly along the crooked and uneven road. The bright sun, glancing upon the white canvas-covers of the wagons, above the tops of the chaparral, gave them the appearance of a long line of tents, moved by some magical agency.

As the advanced guards approached Cerralvo, which was half way on the route, the scouts returned, and reported a large body of lancers posted on the rising ground near the town. Ere the rear-guard, of which Captain Kenneally was in com-

mand, got the report, the Mexicans came down on each flank, screened by the thick chaparral which bordered either side of the road, and thus succeeded in getting between the front and rear guards, so as to cut off a number of wagons from the unprotected portion of the centre.

It was, without doubt, a lack of foresight on the part of Major Giddings, in not placing the guards at short intervals through the train, that they might the better have supported each other, in the event of an attack. They might, also, the more readily, have formed into line along each side of the wagons.

Experience had before taught us, that the Mexicans, in selecting the weakest point of attack upon a train, always fell upon the centre; and before the guards from the distant extremities could arrive to their relief, they were rattling away by some concealed by-path into the thickets,—with mules, wagons, and freight,—where it would be folly to pursue them.

The firing at the centre first intimated to Kennelly the attack. He immediately formed his men into line, and deployed on each side of the train, not knowing from which hand the attack was intended.

With a cocked pistol in each hand, he passed

hurriedly in front of his men, from one end of the line to the other, threatening to shoot down the first man that showed the least symptoms of cowardice.

There was no need of this, for his men trembled only with eagerness to receive the assault. They did receive it gallantly, and were true to their trust. They saved the rear portion of the train; while the Kentuckians, who defended the advance, also drove the lancers from that point. About forty wagons, from the unguarded centre, fell into their hands. The attack was made by the Mexican General Urrea with a force of some two thousand lancers and infantry.

When the cavalry came rattling down upon the centre, a characteristic incident occurred, which was related to me by the survivor of the individuals, who were concerned.

There were two Irishmen, old friends and mess-mates, of Bradley's company, who, being foot-sore, had obtained permission to ride in one of the empty wagons. Their names were Eagan and Connelly. The last had lost three brothers, killed by the Mexicans in Texas, during the war of Independence. He was the last remaining one of his family. Connelly's hatred towards the entire Mexican people was naturally intense. This had led him to enlist;

and he gladly hailed the present as a good opportunity to revenge his murdered brethren.

As the lancers advanced, Connelly sprang from the wagon and gathered an armful of *stones*, leaving his musket behind. Eagan, who had not yet reached the ground, cried out to him to take his gun.

“Here, Michael! take your gun, man! What the divil are yer afther doin’ widout her there? Take her, I say!”

“Och!” exclaimed Michael, “damn the ould firin’-iron! *I’m goin’ to give the bloody murtherers the donnocks!*” and saying this, he rushed into the midst of the charging lancers, and actually scattered the brains of two or three of the foremost before he fell, transfixcd by a dozen lances.

As I said, about forty wagons were cut out from the centre of the train. Those were driven out of the road, and the booty was immediately overhauled by eager hands. One of these wagons happened to be loaded in part with boxes of ammunition for muskets and pistols, which somewhat resemble our specie boxes.

The shout of “*Dinero! dinero!*” (Money! money!) was raised, and called an “anxious meeting” of Mexicans around this particular wagon;—and many busy hands were quickly at work, unloading this valuable prize.

Now, the Mexican soldiers, like all of their countrymen, are at all times, save when sleeping, with a cigarrito in their lips. I have observed them, in the hottest of the fight, dodge behind some intervening object to light a cigarrito, and again resume their weapons; while they seemed to enjoy the fragrant smoke "*con mucho gusto.*" Even when led out to be shot, I have known them to ask, as the last earthly favor, for one more farewell smoke.

Of course, when this cargo of supposed specie was being examined, an unfortunate spark from a soldier's cigarrito communicated with the scattered powder on the bottom of the wagon, and—*presto! change!*—the fractional portions of some thirty "yellow-skins" were scattered to the winds of the chaparral! There was not found a fragment large enough to tempt a starving wolf.

Simultaneous with this explosion, the word flew through the ranks of the disconcerted lancers, that this was but a trick of the *malditos Yengces*, who had purposely permitted these wagons to be taken. They were *infernal machines*; and, in spite of their officers, they refused to have anything more to do with those diabolical Yankee contrivances.

In consequence of this—to us—fortunate affair, the greater part of the wagons were easily recaptured, among which were some that contained really

valuable freight, as well as all the provisions and forage of the party.

The loss of the enemy, in this attack, was over fifty in killed and wounded, as we ascertained from the citizens of Cerralvo on our return.

We, also, lost fifteen teamsters, and two of the escort.

From this point we proceeded unmolested to Camargo, from whence, after a delay of two or three days, to load the train, we returned, without further incidents, to headquarters.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Texas Ranger.—His Horse.—His Regard for his Steed.—Variety of Characters among the Rangers.—Their Intelligence.—Bravery and Skill as Soldiers.—Billy Anderson.—Visit to the Rangers' Camp.—The Rattlesnake.—Billy's Snake Performance.—The "Rattlesnake's Master."—A Medical Fact.—Case of Drunken Soldier in Florida.—The Attention of the Medical Officers called to the Fact.—The Author's Experience.—Cases of Poisoning by the Tarantula.—Alcohol a Remedy.—The Modus Operandi.

NOWHERE, perhaps, could one find such an assemblage of extraordinary and eccentric characters, as were to be met with in a Texas Ranger company. Here, men from all ranks and conditions of society were brought into contact.

Here was the old, scarred hero of many a sanguinary Indian fight, whose head, for many months at a time, had not known the shelter of a roof; but whose only covering had been the "blue vault," and whose only food, such as his trusty rifle had furnished him.

His hardy half-breed horse is to him not only confidential friend and companion, but almost wife and children, also. All his affections—the rough-

looking, hardy man has a warm heart and kindest impulses—are placed upon him; for his intelligent little animal has shared with him all his dangers, hardships, and privations.

The genuine Ranger may always be distinguished from the quasi-Texian, by the animal he rides. He is generally a cross of the mustang of the Texas plains, with the Kentucky or Virginia blood-horse. He possesses all the fire and endurance of the one, combined with the docility, intelligence, and speed of the other; or, rather, all the best points and characteristics of the two races are more perfectly developed in the half-breed horse of the Texas Ranger.

The true Texian, under all circumstances, and at all times, whether on a march or in camp, is more regardful of the convenience and comfort of his steed than of himself. He will go hungry, if need be, that his horse may be fed. He will freely give him the contents of his water-gourd, and suffer from thirst himself, rather than his equine friend and comrade should be permitted to feel it.

I have frequently,—during the cold northers, which are so common on the plains of Texas and Mexico,—seen the Ranger give up his own tent and blankets to his horse, and himself remain exposed to all the rigors of the storm.

The gallant animal, in turn, reciprocates his master's generosity, and springs with alacrity at his slightest word,—knowing and caring as little for danger as his fearless rider,—

“ But spirited, and docile too,
Whate'er was to be done, would do ;
Shaggy, and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like, he carried him ;
Obeyed his voice, and came to call,
And knew him in the midst of all ;
Though thousands were around, and night,
Without a star, pursued her flight,
That steed, from sunset until dawn,
His chief would follow like a fawn.”

Here, also, were found young men, who, being wearied and disgusted with the conventionalities and distinctions of artificial society, had sought for the freedom of a wild adventurous life on the plains of the southwest, and who, by actual services, and severe experiences, had acquired all the requisites and qualifications of hardy Rangers.

Here, too, were met some few, perhaps, who, in some unguarded moment of their lives, had violated the laws of their country, and had sought refuge in the young republic,—where, away from all their former associations, and among strangers, their errors might be repented of, and forgotten like themselves. In many instances, doubtless, these men had left

behind them, in the older States, not only their errors, but their names;—and had buried, with their disgrace, all hopes of ever returning to the scenes of their dishonor. It was often, however, that these unfortunate men proved themselves worthy of the esteem and respect of their associates and fellow-Rangers. Indeed, some of the best, and most prominent men of the early days of Texas, were of this class;—the errors of youth were forgotten, in the valor and integrity of their after years.

Here, also, were encountered adventurers of every profession,—doctors, lawyers, and even parsons,—who, having emigrated to the republic, and finding their professional services at a discount, and that fighting-men were in demand, had shouldered the rifle of the Ranger, and taken their first lessons, in their new profession, from the wild Camanches, those Bedouins of the southwestern plains.

As a body, a more intelligent class could not be found, anywhere, than the Texas Rangers. Their bravery and skill as soldiers, the civilized world has acknowledged;—and will continue so to do, as long as history retains upon her list of heroes, such names as—Hays, Walker, M'Culloch, Walter Lane, Chivalle, Gillespie, and a score of others, of whose fame the country is justly proud.

My intercourse with the Texians brought me in

frequent contact with many "odd sticks," and men of the most eccentric ideas and habits.

Old Billy Anderson was one of these men. He belonged, at the time I first knew him, to Captain Jack Hays' Company of Rangers;—and was at the storming of Monterey. Billy had been an old resident of Texas; having found his way there from some backwoods frontier, many years before;—and while it was in the sole occupation of the roving tribes of hostile Indians. Indian-fighting had been his business and pastime,—and he could boast of the number of Comanche scalps he had taken, with the same coolness and gratification that the trapper would count over the number of his peltries.

Like most men of his class, Billy was at times excessively intemperate; and when an occasion presented, and he was off duty, he would have a most glorious "spree"—which he would continue till the supply of liquor was stopped. Perhaps for weeks, and sometimes for months afterwards, he would live as soberly as an anchorite, and nothing could induce him to indulge in intoxicating drink.

I had visited the camp of the Rangers, one morning, and while leisurely riding through it, my attention was directed towards a group of Texians collected under the shade of a large tree. They seemed to be much amused at something going on

there. Curiosity prompted me to turn my horse's head in that direction, and, on approaching nearer, I observed an old man, seated on a log, and holding in his hand a kind of cage, made of twigs. Within this cage was coiled a large and angry rattlesnake.

This old man was Billy Anderson, who, when on one of his "sprees," was fond of showing off his snake performance. For a fee of a drink of whisky, he would grasp the venomous reptile by the neck, just back of the jaws, and, drawing him forth from the cage, present to him the back of his left hand, or the muscular portion of his arm, for the disgusting creature to fasten his poison fangs into.

The old man said he always carried about him an antidote, which immediately neutralized the poison. At my request, he drew from his pocket a handful of small roots, about the size of my little finger, having somewhat the appearance of ginseng;—this he called the "*rattlesnake's master*."

I knew that the Indians, and also the Texians, were in the habit of carrying about their persons the root of a certain plant,* as a remedy for the bites of this and other serpents. They chew the root, swallowing the juice, and applying the masticated pulp upon the bite.

* The *Aristolochia Serpentaria*. Some use the *Polygala*, or *Seneca* root.

There was no mistake in the snake being a very venomous one, and that he buried his fangs deeply into Billy's arm. In fact, both his arm and hand were covered with the cicatrices of former bites, received in similar foolish exhibitions. On this occasion the snake had just been caught, and presented to Billy for the amusement of his comrades.

The old man had been some days on a "bender," and his skin was pretty well filled with whisky,—or rather of *mescal* or *aguardiente*,—and the wonder to me was, not that Billy experienced so little inconvenience from the fangs of the snake, as that the reptile survived the bite.

Another fact, which I afterwards learned from the old man, was, that he never allowed the snake to bite him when sober; "For," said he, "the rattlesnake's master is not always sure without the whisky."

I state this incident as illustrating a fact in medicine: that a drunken person will bear with impunity the bite and sting of most poisonous reptiles, which might prove immediately fatal to a sober man.

As a further corroborative of the above, I would cite the case of a drunken soldier in Florida, who, while on a debauch, had staggered off outside of the camp, and, tumbling into a clump of bushes,

was soon fast asleep. Some of his comrades were sent out in search of him, as Indians were known to be prowling in the vicinity.

They found him lying in a drunken lethargy, where he had fallen; and, the weather being excessively warm, the soldier was clothed only in cotton shirt and overalls. The shirt had become hitched up to the shoulders, leaving his back, down to his waist, entirely naked.

When found, the man was lying flat on his back; and, on raising him from the ground, they discovered, to their horror, that he had thrown himself upon the opening of a den of rattlesnakes. He had actually fallen on three of those venomous reptiles, which, struggling in vain to escape from the weight of the soldier's body, had literally covered his back with the punctures of their poison-fangs.

Instead of taking the drunken man to the guard-house, as was usual on occasions of drunkenness, his comrades bore him to the hospital, and reported his case to the surgeon; while they awaited his death, which no one doubted was inevitable.

The next morning, however, to the surprise of the surgeon, the man, who had slept off the effects of his debauch, and was still ignorant of what had occurred, begged to be returned to duty. He experienced no more uneasiness from the bites of the

serpents than would naturally result from so many simple punctures of needles.

The attention of the medical officers was called to this fact; and in a short time alcohol, in large doses, was resorted to, in every case of poisoning from the bites or stings of the venomous reptiles and insects, so common in the swamps and everglades of Florida.

While on this subject, I will relate several cases that fell under my own immediate observation, where this remedy proved a complete antidote to the sting of that most disgusting and poisonous of all the venomous reptiles of hot climates,—the *tarantula*.

While stationed at Cerralvo, an infantry soldier, belonging to a fatigue party, gathering wood for fuel, was bitten in the wrist by one of these fearful-looking and vicious creatures. He was brought immediately to the hospital,—the time between receiving the bite and his arrival not exceeding fifteen minutes,—yet the hand and arm, to the elbow, had become black and lived with ecchymosis, and having the appearance of gangrene. He described the agony he endured as being most excruciating.

I immediately directed my steward to get the man “dead drunk” as soon as possible, at the same

time, applying to the hand and arm a poultice of charcoal, bread, and yeast, and to keep the man well wrapped in blankets. He recovered without further pain, and without sloughing of the parts, except in immediate contact with the bite.

On another occasion, at the same post, an Ohioan received a bite from a *tarantula*, which had taken possession of one of his boots. The man, on drawing it on, was bitten on the great toe. I heard him cry out, and ran to his tent in time to kill the reptile.

I forthwith prescribed the usual remedy, and had the foot fomented in hot alcohol. In about two hours the man was under the complete influence of the liquor, and, being wrapped warmly in blankets, was allowed to sweat out the alcohol at the surface.

Again I tried the same remedy for the bite of the tarantula, on a Texas Ranger, with the like good result.

In all these cases there remained but little irritation of the nervous system, save what would naturally arise from the excessive overdosing of the liquor.

The *modus operandi* may probably be explained in this way: the alcohol is a diffusible stimulant, while the venom of the reptile is a powerful sedative. They enter directly into the circulation in

their pure or uncombined state by absorption, or, as is sometimes the case with the venom, by direct injection or transfusion into the venous system, and coming in contact, one poison neutralizes the other; perhaps upon the homœopathic theory of "*similia similibus curantur*."

CHAPTER XV.

The Ranger Escort and Arrival at Marin.—Don Pablo and La Señora.—The Guerrillas.—The Alcalde.—Don Vicente Ramero.—How his Acquaintance was formed.—General Tom Marshall.—A Sincere Friend.—His information in relation to El Mocho.—The Lieutenant of Rangers.—The Plan for a Fight.—Arrival of Dragoons.—An Early March.—The Advance Piquets.—The Prisoners.—The Approach of Day.—Setting the Trap.—The Guerrillas Appear.—“Wait, Boys!”—Springing of the Trap.—The Effects.—The Guerrillas the best Runners.—Death of Dragoons, and Texians Wounded.—The Lieutenant “delicately” Injured!—Change of Positions.—The Struggle.—Desperation of Mocho.—Fight between the Texian Lieutenant and the Guerrilla Leader.—The Death of El Mocho.—Retreat of the Guerrillas.—The Train in Sight.—Gathering up of the Dead and Wounded.—Loss of the Mexicans.

LATE on a sunny afternoon of December, 1848, a party of some twenty-five Texas Rangers, having in charge an express from the States, bound for headquarters, entered the pleasant little town of Marin. I had joined this escort at Cerralvo, from whence we had ridden that day. We were all well mounted, and, having had an early start, had accomplished the distance, some eighteen leagues, in good time.

It was not yet our usual hour for encamping, and we might have reached the camping-ground on the

Salinas before nightfall; but, as we should have but a few hours' ride on the morrow, and good quarters were to be had in the town, we concluded to spend the night here.

I sought the house of Don Pablo, an old Spaniard, with whom I had been for a long time in the habit of stopping, on my halting at this place. He kept a kind of hostelry, where I was sure of finding a welcome, as well as a good supper of *gallina, con huevos*; while my horse would also be well provided for.

The cheerful voice of the good-natured Don saluted me with his usual salutation:

*“Vmd. es en hora buena, Señor Medico; y mi casa está muy á su disposicion.”**

The *muchacho* relieved me of my horse, as I dismounted, and on entering the *sala* I met the cordial greeting of la Señora.

“Señor, had your party arrived a few minutes sooner,” said she, “we of the puebla might have been favored with a little bit of a *fandango*.”

“Yes!” joined in Don Pablo,—“*El Mocho* had but just left the plaza and the puebla, by way of the Campo Santo, as your party entered. 'Tis a pity we could not have had the pleasure of witness-

* You arrive in good hour, Señor Doctor; and my house is at your service.

ing the meeting of such warm *amigos* as El Mocho's men and your Rangers."

"But," asked I, "is there not a chance yet for the meeting? Which way have they gone?"

"To Guadalupe."

"Then there is nothing to prevent our overtaking them, before their arrival; 'tis but three or four leagues from here."

"True! *amigo mio*; but have you forgotten that your horses have already had a hard day's ride, while those of the guerrillas are quite fresh? Besides, Señor, El Mocho's band now numbers more than three hundred; and your chance may be good to meet him before you reach Monterey."

I was upon the point of imparting this information to the lieutenant in command of the Rangers; but reflecting that my friend Don Pablo had a correct view of the subject, concluded to defer it till after their final dispositions had been made for the night. I knew that the fellows, ever eager for a brush with the guerrillas, would have sallied out upon them, late as it was, and in as bad condition as were their horses for the race; and on this occasion, at least, I felt convinced that discretion was certainly the better part of valor.

While I was discussing this matter with Don Pablo, we were joined by the Prefect, or Alcalde

of the town, Don Vicente Romero, who had come to welcome my arrival. This gentleman I had known for a long time, and had made his acquaintance under the following circumstances.

One morning, soon after the destruction of the train, and the massacre of the teamsters, near this place, I had an occasion to visit the guard-house in Monterey; and was struck by the appearance of two very intelligent and gentlemanly-looking Mexicans amongst the prisoners. They were surrounded by a crowd of drunken American soldiers, who had been gathered up by the patrol, from the streets, and low *fundango* houses, the night before.

These gentlemen, it seemed, had been arrested on the accusation of a Mexican deserter, for complicity in that bloody affair. On entering into conversation with them, I was not only much interested in them, but convinced, in my own mind, of their entire innocence.

These gentlemen were Don Vicente, and his brother-in-law, Don Alejandro Garcia. The officer of the day being a particular friend of mine, I was permitted, by becoming responsible for their safe return, to take them to my own quarters, where they were provided with a better breakfast, and under more agreeable circumstances, than they could have had in the crowded guard-house. I then,

in company with the officer of the day, called on General Tom Marshall, who was at the time military Governor of the city, and, representing the impropriety of confining prisoners of their appearance with the drunken rabble of our guard-house, was permitted to retain them in my own house, where a sentinel was placed over them, till they had had an examination.

"Gentlemen," said the gallant Kentuckian, on granting our request, "I make it a rule to consider a prisoner innocent of the charge preferred against him, until he is *proven guilty*;—and as you say these prisoners are gentlemen, I thank you for the courtesy you are disposed to extend to them."

The General, as soon as possible, appointed a Board of Inquiry, to investigate the charges against them. They were found to be entirely groundless, and our friends were restored to liberty.

This little act of courtesy, on my part, was gratefully remembered by Don Vicente, who ever after remained a sincere friend; and on passing Marin, as I frequently had occasion to do, I was always warmly embraced by him, and requested to make his house my own. And often have I experienced his kind hospitalities.

The Alcalde also informed me of the recent

departure of the guerrillas, and also, that they had retired to Guadalupe, with an intention to attack a small wagon-train, which was to leave Monterey on the following day.

“You will, no doubt, find them to-morrow,” said he, “in the heavy chaparral, between the Salinas and Agua Frio, where, from all I could gather from El Mocho, he will await the arrival of the wagons.”

“What is his force?” I asked.

“I should think,” he replied, “about three hundred, or more;—too many I fear for your little party of Tejanos.”

“But, you know, Don Vicente, the Rangers are very devils incarnate. The difference in numbers is never counted by them. With their six-shooting carbines, their two revolver-pistols,—to say nothing of the other tools they may have about them,—each man feels himself a match for more than a dozen of Mocho’s fellows.”

“*Quien sabe!*” replied the Alcalde, with the usual shrug of the shoulder, and a good-natured laugh,—“*quien sabe!*—we will see!”

After disposing of the excellent supper the friendly Don Pablo had provided, I started in search of Lieutenant Smith, of the Rangers, and communicated to him the information I had obtained in relation to

the movements of the guerrillas,—and desired to know what course he intended to pursue.

“We will fight them, of course,” said he. “They will, no doubt, pass the night at Guadalupe, with the intention of secreting themselves in the chaparral, in the morning, near Agua Frio,—there to lie in readiness to pounce upon the wagons and escort as they pass along;—and as they will not probably reach that point before the middle of the day, the guerrillas will be in no hurry to take cover. In the mean time we can start early, and reach the place before daylight, and, unperceived by them, get possession of the ground they intend to occupy, where we can remain concealed,—and, on their coming up, fall suddenly upon them, and take them by surprise.”

This plan was, no doubt, the best that could be adopted. We would have the advantage of the cover of the thickets, where the enemy would be in ignorance of our small numbers; and we could shoot them from their horses, as they came carelessly along the open road. We could also give notice to the advancing train; and, if need be, have the assistance of its little escort.

The Lieutenant left me to communicate with his men, and agreeing to meet me at the house of my friend, Don Vicente.

As I left the quarters occupied by the Texians, and returned to the house of Don Pablo, I detected the sound of approaching horsemen, in the direction of the road we had just passed over. It proved to be a party of some fifteen dragoons, with an officer on his way to headquarters, where he had been summoned to attend a court-martial in session there, as a witness.

This little party, now added to the Rangers, made a force of upwards of forty men,—full enough, with the advantages we anticipated, to cope with the three hundred guerrillas we hoped to engage.

The Rangers, in the mean time, had received their instructions, and were notified to hold themselves in readiness for an early start on the morrow. The lieutenant and his dragoons were also to join us. Accordingly, some two hours before day, and before any of the people of the town were astir, we were on our way.

The orders were to proceed cautiously, with as little noise as possible, lest the guerrillas, being aware of our arrival at Marin, might have stationed a *piquet* guard at the ford of the Salinas, to give notice of our movements. Such being the case, it was necessary for us to advance without attracting their attention.

A party of half a dozen selected men were detailed

to precede the main body, on foot, and ascertain if such were the fact. We were to halt about a quarter of a mile from the stream, to await their return. Advancing under cover of the darkness, these men discovered a partially concealed camp-fire on the further side of the river. Silently approaching the river, and crossing it a little below the ford, they passed up along the bank, under cover of the thickets, and came suddenly upon a party of three Mexicans, stretched upon the ground by the smouldering fire, and, wrapped in their *serapes*, snoring off their morning sleep; while, a little way off, near the ford, they observed the outlines of a sentinel on the look-out, up the road towards Marin.

The Texians came upon them so quietly that, before the sleepers were awake, or the sentinel suspected their presence, they were all unarmed, and prisoners.

They were given in charge of four of the party, while the other two returned to us and reported progress.

We learned from the Mexicans, that they had been left at the ford to watch our party, with instructions to report at Guadalupe when we should cross.

El Mocho wished to avoid us, and, supposing that we were ignorant of their intentions, had no doubt

we would proceed directly to Monterey,—leaving the road open for them to fall upon the train.

Taking our prisoners along with us, we continued our march till we passed about two miles beyond the Salinas, where, coming into the heavy chaparral, we concluded to halt and await the approach of the guerrillas.

We dismounted, and hitched our horses some distance from the road, where, behind a small ridge, they would be out of sight, and, in case of a fight, out of harm's way.

Our prisoners were secured, also, in the rear, with a guard over them, and the horses.

By this time, the first gray streaks of daylight began to glimmer over the landscape,—partially lighting up the deep recesses of the chaparral, where we had taken cover. Further, and further, the vision could stretch along the dim vista of the road we had passed. Slowly the distant mountains reared their dark masses from out the general gloom;—then a faint gleam, at first, lighted the spires of the western ridges, which, brightening and spreading, at length gilded the mountain-sides,—bringing into bold relief the floating clouds and mist-wreaths, moving over their broken faces;—then, from the eastern ridges, the beams of the morning sun streamed up, pouring a flood of golden

light down their ragged cliffs,—illuminating the deep ravines, and gorges which seamed their rocky fronts,—and day—bright, clear, unclouded, sunny day,—warmed and glowed upon the dewy landscape.

As the stars of morning sank, one by one, behind the craggy tops of the Sierra Madre, and the beams of the approaching day appeared,—they were welcomed at first, by the faint and occasional “chirp” of some little dweller of the chaparral; and, as the night faded gradually away, the voices increased in number and volume—each note awaking still another, and another—till, when the full beams of day appeared, the thickets were made vocal with the songs of birds, and the mingled whirring and chirpings of the myriad insect life of the southern woods.

We did not look for the advance of the guerrillas for some hours yet; and, as we were completely screened by the vine-tangled thickets, our men drew from their well-filled haversacks the breakfast they had prepared at their mess-fires the night before, and sat down to it with a double relish, after their early morning ride.

When we had dispatched this extempore meal, our final arrangements were made for the reception of the “yellow-skins.” First, a number of Rangers

were sent off to reconnoitre the bridle-path which came into the road we were on, a short distance in our rear. This was the only route the guerrillas could take from Guadalupe, which village lay among the hills to the northeast of us.

Our main party was formed in a line parallel with the road; and where an opening in the thicket occurred, it was filled up with the green tops of bushes, cut up on the spot with the sabres of the dragoons.

Thus prepared, we silently and patiently waited till about ten o'clock, when our scouts came in with the good news that the guerrillas were, at length, abroad, and were advancing towards the road.

Every man of our party was prepared, and hoping anxiously for the opening of the *fandango*. Their weapons had been thoroughly examined, and freshly capped; and in our little force of forty men, were nearly five hundred shots to be used, before it would be necessary to reload a piece.

As our returned scouts took up their places in the line, we heard the tramp of the Mexicans' horses, and presently they came in sight down the road. The one-handed leader was riding in advance, followed by his entire band,—consisting, as my friend Don Vicente had informed me, of more than three hundred desperate, dare-devil fellows.

We saw, by the swaggering and confident manner they came along, that they dreamed not of the trap we were about to spring upon them.

The word was passed in whispers along our line,—"Wait, boys! till they come close up. Shoot down their horses first, to prevent escape,—and then finish the greasers!"

On they came, thoughtless of danger; not a word was spoken by our men, as each one firmly grasped his weapon; and when the Mexicans filled the road in front of us, they were suddenly startled by the "*click! click! click!*" of our gun-locks, followed in rapid succession by the fearful word "*fire!*" and the more fearful and deadly volley from our whole force! Down tumbled horses and riders, mingled together in the dusty road,—riderless horses reared and trampled frantically over the dead and dying. The yelling of the infuriated guerrillas, and the shouting of our men, with the furious struggling of the wounded animals, and the continued and rapid discharges of our carbines and revolvers, altogether formed a pandemonium revolting to the senses.

For an instant, the guerrillas were panic-stricken. Those in the rear, who had escaped unhurt from the first volley, turned their horses' heads, and were rapidly flying on the back track. El Mocho's horse had been shot down, but himself, as yet, had es-

caped unhurt. Springing into the chaparral on the opposite side of the road, he called his men to gather around him. About a hundred and fifty obeyed the call, and, yelling like infuriated demons, now returned our fire,—at the same time, falling back along the road leading towards Agua Frio. Some three hundred yards from where they had taken cover, and on the same side of the road, was a cultivated field, fenced in by a close, brush hedge, while, opposite to it, was an open space, or what had once been a pasture. This was without a fence or bushes, and afforded no shelter whatever. We, at once, saw that it was the design of the guerrillas to get under the shelter of this hedge,—and Lieutenant Smith gave the order to charge out upon them, if possible, to frustrate their object. But the Mexicans proved themselves the best runners, and, before we could recover the friendly shelter of our chaparral, they had gained the hedge, from whence they sent a volley of shot after us, which killed two of the dragoons, and wounded three of the Rangers, among whom was their commanding-officer. The Lieutenant's wound, however, was not of a very serious character,—it only made it necessary, afterwards, when on our way to Monterey, for him to mount his horse *lady fashion*.

We now changed our ground, and crossing the

road, poured a promiscuous fire into them,—all the time advancing, step by step, under the partial cover of the thickets; and when within about a hundred yards of their left, we charged, with a rush, over the hedge, and were in the midst of them.

The fight was now a hand-to-hand-struggle,—but the six-shooters of the Rangers, and the sabres of the dragoons made quick work of it. The slaughter was great, as the guerrillas, knowing they had no right to expect quarter, as they had never given it, fought like devils. Their Captain fought desperately,—calling on his men to fight to the death,—yelling defiance at the “*maldito Tejanos*,” and exhibiting all the ferocity of a wounded lion. His belt was filled with revolver pistols, which, as fast as he discharged, he flung at the heads of the closing Rangers. While using his pistols, he carried his heavy sabre under his handless arm.

Young Smith, still smarting from his *vis a tergo*, now seeing good opportunity to revenge himself, rushed into the crowd of guerrillas, who fought around their leader; clearing a track through them with his sabre, he stood before the stalwart Mexican. As the latter sprang towards him with his uplifted sabre, the Texan, taking deliberate aim with his revolver, planted a ball into the very centre of his

forehead ;—and El Mocho, the terror of rancheros, and long the pest and annoyance of the Americans, lay at his feet,—his life-blood welling up hotly from the little wound.

The fall of their leader scattered the guerrillas in dismay. They fell back in all directions, whilst the Texians pursued them, and shot them down, till weary of the bloody work.

Some few of the Mexicans succeeded in scrambling over the hedge, and regaining their horses, which had been running, wounded and affrighted, through the thickets. But the greater number were glad to escape into the deep chaparral, where they remained secreted till we had left the vicinity.

This affair was no sooner over, than the train hove in sight, descending the hill beyond Agua Frio. We gathered up our dead, six in number, two dragoons and four Rangers, and our wounded, which amounted to eleven. But a few only of the latter were seriously injured ; and when the wagons came up, we detached two of them to convey the killed and wounded to the camp, while we remounted, and brought up the rear.

When we had retired, the fugitive guerrillas returned to the spot and gathered up their own killed and wounded, some fifty of whom lay scattered over the ground.

CHAPTER XVI.

The First Volunteers a better Class of Men than those who came towards the Close of the War.—The Private sometimes socially superior to his Officer.—The Rifle Regiments of Texas and Mississippi.—The Northern Volunteers.—The genuine Texas Rangers.—The pseudo-Texians.—The Gang of "Mustang Grey."—Like Falstaff's Ragamuffins.—Their only Object Plunder.—Their Murder of the Rancheros of Guadalupe.—Canales' Proclamation, and Commencement of Guerrilla Warfare.—The Proclamation was unheeded by the better class of Mexicans.—News from New England.—A Regiment from Old Massachusetts.—A Regiment expected of whom we might be proud.—Bad Reports.—Egregiously sold.—The State disgraced.—The Murder of Harrison Beal.—The Circumstances.—The Burial of poor Beal.—Scott drawing off our Forces.—Conversation between the General and Major Bliss.—The Regiment under Marching Orders.—Another Murder.—A Portion of the Regiment remain in Confinement in the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa till Close of the War.—Meeting of North Carolinians.

THE first volunteer forces, which, in obedience to the requisitions on the different States, hastened to the reënforcement of General Taylor, were made up of altogether different materials from those troops who were sent to the country towards the close of the war.

The first were impelled by generous and not

mercenary motives. They were the culled men of the country; and were mostly young men,—the majority of them from the best ranks of society,—men of education and refinement. Gentlemen were as often found in the ranks, with musket or rifle on shoulder, as amongst the officers; and not unfrequently was it the case, that the private on duty as sentinel, saluted his commanding officer, whom he would scarcely have recognized at home. They were brave, proud-spirited fellows, with just vanity enough to feel that all the eyes and hopes of the country were fixed upon them. And each individual had a due sense of his responsibility to his country, and counted himself, and justly so, a host in himself. Such were the rifle regiments of Texas and Mississippi, the infantry and rifle regiments of Louisiana from the South, and the forces raised in the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio from the North. It is also true that many other volunteer regiments, who arrived in the country soon after the taking of Monterey, were made up of good materials; and, in the majority, were well officered.

Of all the southern volunteers of General Taylor's division, the Mississippians and Texas Rangers most distinguished themselves. They were in all the battles of that line, after those of Palo Alto and

Resaca de la Palma. At Monterey and Buena Vista, these gallant troops were cruelly cut up. Hardly one-tenth of the members of those veteran regiments were returned to their homes,—and those with shattered constitutions. The first Rangers from Texas, of whom I have already spoken, were the genuine, brave, and hardy pioneers of that young and rising State. They were the men of Goliad and San Jacinto;—men whose greatest sport was an open prairie-fight with the untamable Camanches. They had measured arms with the Mexicans, and had a just appreciation of them. They knew their weakness, and how to take advantage of it.

But some of the so-called Texas Rangers, who came into the country at a later period, were mostly made up of adventurers and vagabonds, whose whole object was plunder. Like Falstaff's ragamuffins, they were—"Such as, indeed, were never soldiers; but discarded, unjust serving-men,—younger sons to youngest brothers;—revolted tapsters, and hostlers trade-fallen;—ten times more dishonorable and ragged than an old-faced ancient!"

The gang of miscreants under the leadership of "*Mustang Grey*" were of this description. This party, in cold blood, murdered almost the entire male population of the rancho of Guadalupe,—where not a single weapon, offensive or defensive,

could be found! Their only object being plunder.

Instead of having these scoundrels hanged, as they deserved, the General could only order them out of the country.

Others came after them, but were not mustered into service ;—the General declaring that the American army should be no longer disgraced by such wretches.

It was the acts of such men as these, that provoked the retaliatory cruelties and murders of the guerrillas.

The following manifesto was taken from a captured guerrilla, belonging to the band of Canales, by Lieutenant Bee, of Lamar's Rangers, and shows how the unprovoked murder of the people of Guadalupe was received by the Mexicans.

“I this day send, to the Adjutant Inspector of the National Guards, the following instructions :

“I learn, with the greatest indignation, that the Americans have committed a most horrible massacre, at the rancho of Guadalupe. They made prisoners, in their own houses, and by the side of their families, twenty-five peaceable men, and immediately shot them.

“To repel this class of warfare, which is not war, but atrocity in all its fury, there is no other course

left us than retaliation; and, in order to pursue this method, rendered imperative by the fatal circumstances above-mentioned, you will immediately declare martial law, with the understanding that, eight days after the publication of the same, every individual, who has not taken up arms, (being capable of so doing), shall be judged a traitor, and instantly shot.

“Martial law being in force, you are bound to give no quarters to any American whom you may meet, or who may present himself to you, even though he be without arms.

“You are also directed to publish this to all the towns in this State; forcibly impressing them with the severe punishment that shall be inflicted for the omission of this order.

“We have arrived at that state, in which our country requires the greatest sacrifices; her sons should glory in nothing, but to become soldiers, and, as brave Mexicans, to meet the crisis. Therefore, if the army of invasion continues, and our people remain in the towns, which they have molested, they deserve not one ray of sympathy; nor should any one ever cease to make war upon them.

“You will send a copy of this to each of your subordinates, and they are authorized to proceed against the chiefs of their squadrons, or against their

colonels, or any other, even against me, for any infraction of this order—the only mode of salvation left. The enemy wages war against us, and even against those peaceable citizens who, actuated by improper impulses, desire to remain quiet in their houses. Even these they kill without quarter; and this is the greatest favor they may expect from them. The only alternative left us, under these circumstances, is retaliation; which is the strong right of the offended against the offending. To carry this into effect, attach yourself to the authorities. Your failing to do this will be considered a crime of the greatest magnitude.

“All the officers of the troops are directed to assist you in carrying out this order; and it is distinctly understood, there shall be no exceptions. Neither the clergy, military, citizens, nor other persons, shall enjoy the privilege of remaining peaceably at their homes.

“The whole of the corporation shall turn out with the citizens, leaving solely as authority of the town, one of the members, who is over sixty years of age; at the same time, if all the members are capable of bearing arms, then none shall be excepted; leaving to act some one who is incapable of military service. You yourself must be an example to others, by conforming to this requisition. And I send this

to you for publication; and charge you to see it executed in every particular; and communicate it to all the commanders of the squadrons in your city, who will aid you in carrying into effect these instructions; and, in fact, you are directed to do all, and everything, which your patriotism may prompt. God and Liberty!"

This document was extensively circulated amongst the people; and no doubt excited many of the lower classes, and soldiery, to acts of outrages and murder. They were prompted as much by fear of the threats it contained, as by a spirit of retaliation and revenge. There is no doubt, but that the system of guerrilla warfare would have been adopted by the Mexicans, had not those atrocities been committed by the cut-throats unfortunately attached to our army;—but it is very reasonable to suppose that it would not have been marked by such implacable hatred, as certainly distinguished it.

However, to the honor of many of the simple-hearted rancheros, as well as to the more intelligent citizens of Monterey, it should be recorded, that those outrages of the so-called Texians were looked upon in their true light. They well knew that they were repudiated, not only by the Commanding-General, but also by all the respectable portion of the American army. By these persons, therefore,

the cold-blooded proclamation of Canales was treated with the disrespect it deserved; and our friendly intercourse with them remained uninterrupted till our final evacuation of the country.

Prince Henry.—Whose fellows are these that come after?

Falstaff.—Mine, Hal, mine.

Prince Henry.—I did never see such pitiful rascals.

Falstaff.—Tut, tut! Good enough to toss: food for powder, food for powder;—they'll fill a pit as well as better."

As yet the New England States had not been represented in the volunteer forces; but at length, after all the battles of Taylor's line had been fought, and our army was in quiet possession of the country, from the shores of the Gulf to the interior, beyond the eastern range of the Sierra Madre,—a rumor reached us, that old Massachusetts was raising a regiment to send to us; that a son of her first of statesmen was to accompany it; and that not only would this regiment come with the implements of war in one hand, but with the printing-press,—the engine of peace and civilization,—in the other.

With the name of Massachusetts was associated the Roman virtues of her earlier history;—Bunker's Hill, and the blood of her noblest sons, so freely poured forth through the long struggle of the Revo-

lution,—and the heroic stand her people have ever since taken in the moral struggle for human rights, and for the elevation of the standard of our national character.

We reasonably hoped that this regiment would represent the genuine Yankee stock of the State, and that we might point to it with pride, and say to the Mexican people: “See! there is a body of the true men of the north.”

The time seemed long since they were reported to have left their native State, before they arrived, so desirous were we to see them, and welcome them to our ranks.

At length, we of Monterey heard of the landing of this regiment at Matamoras. The same express, also, brought reports of excesses and outrages perpetrated upon the citizens of that town, by some of these men; but we were not willing to give credence to the reports. There certainly was some mistake. The Massachusetts men had been confounded with some of the discharged desperadoes;—for certainly Massachusetts men were not of that quality. But at last, when the long-looked-for regiment reached us, and was marched into the city, we found, to our mortification, that we had been most egregiously *sold*. Never was the name of the glorious old “Mother of the Nation” so ungenerously

used, as when applied to this promiscuous assemblage of unwashed foreigners, from the sea-ports and manufacturing towns of that State.

Some of the officers were gentlemanly men, worthy of being attached to a more respectable corps. Some were, indeed, "men of Massachusetts;" but there was not enough of the New England element in the regiment to give character to the mass. A number of these officers left, soon after arriving in the country,—young Webster among them,—and attached themselves to the other corps, or were transferred, at their own requests, to some of the departmental offices.

It was at the time this regiment was stationed in the city of Monterey, that the brave old Texian, Harrison Beal, was deliberately murdered in cold blood, by order of the colonel* of the regiment.

The circumstances were these:—poor Beal had been a member of Colonel Jack Hays' regiment of Rangers, and was one of the first to enter the city, on the 21st of September, 1846; and, like others of that corps, had been permitted to remain in the town, where he had started a very profitable business, as a saloon and restaurant-keeper. He had just purchased a fine American horse, of some vol-

* Not C—b C—ng, of *Señorita* celebrity. He had become one of Mr. Polk's "generals."

unteer officer, about to return home, and had made up a party of friends to visit the hot springs of *Agua Caliente*, on the morrow, (Sunday). Accordingly, in the morning he started to ride through the plaza, to the place where he had appointed to meet his friends. The plaza was large, and the smooth, level ground tempted the Texian to put his new horse through his paces. On one side of this square was the guard-house, occupied by some of the "Massachusetts men;"—and a sentinel with a loaded musket, pacing up and down before it. At the moment Beal was crossing the plaza from one side, the Colonel entered it in the opposite direction. The two men were well acquainted,—the officer being sometimes a customer at the saloon of the other. Beal saluted him familiarly, with "Good-morning, Colonel;" which was returned with the inquiry, "Why in h—l he rode so fast?"—and an order to halt! Beal slightly checked his horse, and, supposing the officer only in a gossiping humor, good-naturedly replied, "that he was in a hurry to meet some friends, and could not stop." The Colonel then abruptly turned towards the Irish sentinel, and ordered him to "shoot down that damned Texian!" The order was no sooner given than the soldier brought his piece to his shoulder, and, deliberately aiming at Beal, as he rode by, shot him

through the heart ! He tumbled headlong from his horse,—dead !

The body of the murdered man was dragged into the guard-house ; where his friends were not permitted to enter, or to give it decent burial. After lying in one corner of the room, in a puddle of its own blood, for several hours, it was trundled off to the Tanyard fort ; where it was thrown into a shallow pit, and disposed of, like the carcass of a dog.

The indignation of the Texians, and other Americans in the town, was very great ; and it was with difficulty that the Texians could be withheld from an attack upon the quarters of the murderer. A more cold-blooded and unprovoked act of homicide was never perpetrated.

The friends of poor Beal had his body removed to his own house, where it was washed, and decently placed in a coffin. It was afterwards attended by a large procession to the grave ; and was interred as the remains of a worthy man, and brave soldier should have been.

Soon after this, while the administration was endeavoring to cripple General Taylor, not only by withholding necessary supplies of men and munitions,—but had instructed General Scott to draw on him for his available forces, and Taylor had yielded regiment after regiment, and battery after

battery, till obedience had ceased to be a virtue; and the General determined not to part with another man worth retaining,—he said to his Adjutant-General,—“Major Bliss, the next requisition Scott makes upon us, send him that infernal Massachusetts regiment. I have no need of them,—and he is quite welcome to them.”

“And I am sure, General,” replied the Major, “we shall then no longer be troubled with his requisitions.”

Accordingly, in a few days this regiment was under marching orders;—and was to proceed to Matamoras. from whence it was to be shipped to Vera Cruz.

The day the regiment left town, was marked by another murder. As it passed over the Virgin’s Bridge, on the way towards the general camp,—a drunken Irishman refused to proceed further. This, of course, created some confusion in the ranks. The order was given, “Shoot the damned rascal!”—and one of his comrades,—as drunk as himself,—deliberately blew out his brains!

“Forward march!”—and the regiment moved on, as if nothing worthy of note had occurred. The body of the murdered man lay on the bridge for some hours,—when some of the residents in the vicinity removed it, and gave it a hasty burial.





THE PINEY WOODS VOLUNTEERS.—Page 305.

It is also a notorious fact, that the character of this regiment was such, that, on arriving at Vera Cruz, General Scott ordered a portion of it to garrison the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, where they were detained, virtually as prisoners, till the termination of the war.

Perhaps I should be guilty of gross injustice, to pass over, unnoticed, another body of volunteers, who came to the country towards the close of the war. This was the regiment from North Carolina.

My introduction to these new levies occurred in this wise:—I was on the road to Camargo, when, one pleasant morning, having passed Punta Aguda, I observed a small grassy glade, a little distance from the wagon-track. Its bright verdure tempted me to turn aside, that my horse might refresh himself upon its rich herbage.

The train, consisting of some two hundred wagons, escorted by Texas Rangers, had filed past me, as I lay upon the ground, enjoying the apparent gusto with which my steed cropped the juicy grass.

I lay thus,—half asleep, half awake, when the sound of voices approaching along the road, from the opposite direction, attracted my attention:

"Now them's Texas Rangers, be they?"

"Yes; so the teamsters said."

“Wal ! I’ll be smoked in a tar-kill, ef they ain’t jest like anybody else, arter all ;—only they don’t wear soger-close, like us. But did ye mind,—they straddle mighty nice hosses !”

“That’s a fact, Jo ! and the fellow that driv that big yaller mule-team, said that them ’ere Taxyans got eighteen dollars a month !”

“*Eighteen dollars !* whew ! wal, that’s a heap of money, anney how !”

“I say, dad !” now chimed in a voice I had not heard before,—“what wages do’ee think we’r goin’ to git ?”

“Dunno, Sam ! but I b’lieve about seven dollars a month, and the vittles thrown in.”

“O, h—l !” replied Sam ;—“a fellow mought a’ done nigh as well as that down in the old piney-woods, a scraping, and totin’ tar-pentine.”

“I s’pose we mought, Sam ;—but you know, sonney, there’s no glory to be had thar.”

“Damn the glory ! I say, dad ;—I goes in for the dollars,—the-real shiners,—I does ! Damn green, we wos, to come ’way out to this h—l of a place to be shot at by Injuns and Mexekins ! For my part, ole hoss, I only wish I wos once more on t’other side o’ Tar river. I’ve seen glory enough already, in this damned thorny country,—I have ! Why ! yer can’t put yer foot down without stickin’ a

blasted thorn through it;—it's all thorny. Every tree I've seed yet has thorns on it;—even the dod-ratted frogs and grasshoppers have horns;—and it's the thorniest, hornyest country on airth!—damn it, I say."

I had heard enough to excite my curiosity to know who these men were; so, throwing the bridle of my horse over a cactus plant, I stepped out to the road to reconnoitre.

From some words they dropped, however, I had no doubt of the State that had the honor to be represented by them.

As I stepped into the dusty wagon-track, I encountered three as strange objects as ever met my gaze. They were an old man, and two long-legged, long-armed, scrawny, *old-looking* boys! The three figures were accoutred alike, in bran new suits of soldiers' fatigue uniforms;—but more unsoldier-like objects I never beheld.

The old man's overalls, which were a world too wide and too long for his skinny corpus, were rolled up above his bare, tan-colored knees, while the jacket came below the hips, and was buttoned up full in front, throwing the old fellow's head back at a fearful angle, with his sharp, bony chin pointing to the zenith. His blue fatigue-cap hung low down on his little bottle-shaped head, and rested by its

rim on a huge pair of leathery ears, which stood out in most grôtesque relief from his head. The cap, like the rest of his dress, was intended for a much larger man, and fitted to his caput like a corn-basket to the top of a horse-post. Upon the whole, he reminded me of the old plantation song about—

“A bull-frog dressed in soldier’s clothes.”

The dresses of the boys were as much too scant for them as the old man’s was too large. Their scrawny extremities protruded from them in ungainly contortions, and bore no small resemblance to the “lite-wood knots” of their native “piney-woods.”

As I moved out into the road, these men made a sudden halt, and, throwing their bright new regulation muskets into a clubbing position, demanded, in an excited tone,

“*Who be you?*”

“A friend,” I replied, bursting into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, at the truly comical figures before me. “Put down your guns, men, I won’t hurt you.”

“Wal! now I’m darned ef I didn’t take ye for a bloody Mexekin, and no mistake!” said one of the boys.

“Mister! du you belong to that long string of waggins that’s jest driv by?”

I replied that I was accompanying the train.

“Wal, now, then, stranger, I reckon yer mought tell us ef it’s a fact that all these ’ere waggins and mules belong to General Taylor?”

I assured them most seriously that such *was* the fact.

“And does he buy all the vittles, and pay the wages of all the sogers he keeps?”

“Most assuredly?” I replied.

“And does he own all them ’ere steamboats we seed on the Ryo Gran?”

“Of course, he does; he owns them all.”

“Wal! all I’ve got to say about it, then, boys,” exclaimed the old man,—throwing up his huge, bony hands, and giving his cap a tilt upon the back of his little head,—“all I’ve got to say about it, is,—he is the goldarndest richest ole coon I ever hearn tell ov,—that’s all! Kurnul Johnsin’ ’way down on Tar river, with all his sloop-loads of tar, tarpentine, and shingles, can’t hold a light ’ud knot to him,—he can’t!”

“Yes, dad,—and that an’t all, either;—they du say, that the ole General has got one ov the biggest plantations on all the Marsissippi; with hundreds and thousands ov niggers to boot; and the way the

kinkies tumble out the sugar, and cotton, and sich,—is a sin to ole David Crocket!"

Being appealed to, I also corroborated this last statement.

"And now," said I, "having given you all the information you have required, will you be so kind, gentlemen, as to tell me where you are from?"

"O! *we're* from ole Varginny;—but that whole sward of fellows coming yander, *they're* from Nor Carline,—*close on the Varginny line.*"

This was precisely the answer I expected to get for I have yet to see the North Carolinian from the "piney-woods," who does not hail from "Varginny," or "close upon the Varginny line." They are as rare as Virginians, who are not members of the first families."

By this time, the main body of this new regiment of "during-the-war men" came straggling up. So, bidding my piney-woods friends good-by, and recommending them to keep a sharp look-out for the *bloody Mexekins*, I returned to my horse, and remounting, soon rejoined the train.

CHAPTER XVII.

Our Line of Occupation.—Attempts to introduce Steam on the Rio Grande.—Former Mode of Navigating that River.—The People Two Hundred Years Behind the Age.—Volunteers Introduce the Loom and Spinning-Wheel.—The Mexican Plough.—The Passage of a Steamboat, an Event.—How Regarded by the Natives.—Camargo the Head of Navigation.—The Road from Camargo to Monterey.—Mier.—Punta Aguda Burnt by Colonel Curtiss.—The March of the 3rd Ohio Regiment.—Chicharrones.—The Death of Lieutenant Miller.—Cerralvo.—Agua Dulcis.—Mountain Scenery.—Sunrise among the Mountains.—The March.—Ramos.—Marin.—Rio Salinas.—Agua Frio.—El Bosque de Santo Domingo.

THE line of operations, occupied by the forces under the command of General Taylor, extended from the Gulf coast, to a point some sixty miles beyond the city of Saltillo;—including a distance of something like one hundred and thirty-five leagues. Of this distance, about fifty leagues was upon the navigable waters of the Rio Grande, which were plied by light-draught steamboats.

Previous to the war, several attempts had been made to introduce steamers upon this river;—but the repugnance of the natives to everything like improvements or innovations, upon the old *Adamic*

plan of things, interfered to prevent the adoption of these modern conveniences. Therefore, up to this period, the navigation of this rapid stream was confined only to a few canoes and batteaus, laden with hides or corn, from the towns of Camargo and Raynosa, and the ranchos along its fertile banks;—while the transportation of goods from Matamoras, the great commercial mart of Eastern Mexico, was done on the backs of mules and donkeys; with this noble river flowing, for many leagues, parallel with the century-trodden mule-paths.

When we had obtained a foothold in the country, we found ourselves among a people, two hundred years, at least, behind the age, in the common arts and conveniences of life. Even a spinning-wheel, or a hand-loom, was an implement unknown to them;—and when the volunteers, as was often the case, had manufactured these instruments, with such rude tools as were to be found in the camp, and initiated the women into the use of them,—they were looked upon, by these simple people, as the wonder and perfection of mechanical art. Although quick to learn, and ready to acquire the uses of uncomplicated machinery, when they were furnished to them, they were destitute of the simplest form of labor-saving instruments.

The plough of the Mexican peasant is the same

rude implement that was used by his Indian ancestor, centuries before. It is, simply, a crooked stick—produced and finished to the hand of the husbandman by nature. Sometimes, however, this primitive plough his met with under an improved form,—which is the addition of a buffalo's horn upon its wooden point. Its uses are nothing more than to scratch up, in a very imperfect manner, the surface of the prolific soil.

The passage of a steamboat was an event which, with a few experimental exceptions, had not occurred since Colonel Stephen F. Austin, the first American pioneer of Texas, had attempted, many years before, to introduce one upon the waters of the Rio Grande,—till our Government had purchased and chartered a number of worn-out, rickety Mississippi craft, and sent them puffing and snorting up this stream, to transport troops and munitions of war.

These novel affairs were regarded with wonder and astonishment by the natives, who would gather along the shore for leagues, from the interior, to witness their passage. Many of them actually believed them to be living, breathing monsters—the very all-devouring cannibals of whom their priests had warned them.

In a few months, new and respectable-looking steamers, built expressly for this river, were churn-

ing its turbid waters; and, at the close of the war, private enterprise was extensively engaged in the navigation of the "mad river of the north."

Camargo,* near the mouth of the San Juan, which debouches into the Rio Grande, was, at this period, the supposed head of navigation. But, since then, boats have proceeded much further up the stream;—indeed, with some little improvements of the channel, this river might be navigable for many leagues.

The road from Camargo towards Monterey passes through a variety of interesting scenery. For the first sixty miles it runs over a fertile plain, where comfortable and picturesque villages and ranchos enliven the way. Thick growths of chaparral, and,

* It was at this place that *General Pillow* immortalized his name, by originating a new style of military engineering. It was the planning, and actual building, of a fortification, *with the ditch inside the breast-works*, and posts and chains, from the Quartermaster's stores, stretched around the works, where *less enlightened* engineers would have dug the ditch! Colonel May one afternoon amused himself by breasting his horse against this formidable defense, and breaking up a number of most excellent trace-chains, which were intended to do service in the trains.

Pillow was one among a number of militia generals, some of whom were promoted "Georgia Majors," who had been forced upon the army;—and were designated as "*Polk's pets*." They were, most of them, small-fry politicians, who had been paid off, by the administration, with commissions they disgraced.

This was the same *General Pillow* who afterwards essayed to steal the laurels from the brow of the veteran hero, Scott.

in some places, timber of considerable size, cover the unoccupied country.

About ten leagues from Camargo, we arrive at the pleasant and cleanly little town of Mier; a place made famous as the scene of the brave exploits of a small party of Texians, who, defeating a vastly superior force of Mexican artillerists, gained possession of the place, and held it—till, induced by false representations, they were betrayed into the power of the enemy; and afterwards were forced to draw lots; and every tenth man was shot down, in cold-blood, by the treacherous Mexicans.

Leaving Mier, we next encamp at Punta Aguda. This place, when we first visited it, contained a population of some fifteen hundred *rancheros*, who furnished us with a plentiful supply of fresh provisions, and were very friendly disposed towards us.

A few months after, on the passage of Colonel Curtiss, of the 3rd Ohioans, this pretty village was laid in ashes, in retaliation for some depredations which had been committed upon some of our trains, while on the road; and of which, there is no doubt, these people were entirely innocent.

The march of that regiment, all the way to Monterey, was marked with devastated fields, and the smoking ruins of villages and ranchos, where the advancing columns of our army had met with shelter

and friendly receptions. Such are the horrors of war: the innocent and friendly peasantry are oftenest made to suffer its penalties. These unwarrantable acts of cruelty were severely censured by General Taylor, who immediately issued orders, forbidding a repetition of them.

The next usual encamping ground, on the upward march, after leaving Punta Aguda, is the spot where stood, when we first rested here, the little *ranchita* of Chicharrones. Not an adobe remained upon another of its walls, after the passage of our modern Attila.

There, under a rude cairn, smoulder the bones of the brave Lieutenant C. D. Miller, of the 2nd Ohioans. He lies upon the spot where he fell by the assassin shot of a guerrilla. A party of Americans, soon after passing, recognized the body, and gave it burial; and erected a pile of stones upon the grave, to protect it from the jackals.

The next day's march brings us to Cerralvo; where the scenery assumes an entirely new character. From this point, the road takes a wide circuit from the direct line, to avoid the first advanced spurs of the Sierra Madre; and brings us, at an early hour, to encamp at the rancho of Agua Dulcis,—appropriately so named, from the spring of delicious water, which tempts the weary soldier to rest by its margin.

The march for the following day passes along a broken valley, walled in on either hand by craggy mountains, which rear their bare granitic pinnacles to the skies; their castellated spires, stained and scarred by the storms of ages, tower in grand sublimity among the clouds.

Here, among the mountains, the sunrise scene which greets the traveler early abroad, is of itself worth a journey to witness. It were useless to attempt a description of it,—for words cannot convey an adequate idea of its surpassing grandeur and beauty.

With reluctance we leave our pleasant camping-place, where all night long we have been lulled to dreamy slumbers, by the ceaseless music of the mountain stream, as it sings its way along over the polished pebbles which line its bottom;—and while yet the deep shadows linger upon the landscape, we mount, and resume the march before us. The stars burn clear above us, and the mists rest upon the mountain slopes; but ere we have proceeded far,—

“The day comes on apace,
The clouds roll up in gold and amber flakes,
And all the stars grow dim. The morning breaks,
It breaks—it comes—the misty shadows fly;
A rosy radiance gleams along the sky;
The mountain-tops reflect it calm and clear,—
The plain is yet in shade, but day is near.”

The sun struggles through the clouds, which still slumber among the peaks, and lights up the horizon with all the brilliant and beautiful hues of nature. The colors of the rainbow, and the ever-varying, changing tints of pearl and amethyst, fade and die in contrast with this gorgeous lighting up of the clouds of early morning among the mountains of Mexico.

“ ————And jocund day,
Upon the mountain tops, sits gaily dressed.”

All day our route lies between mountain ridges, which in some places jut up upon the path, or overhang it with rugged and frowning cliffs; then receding, leave a wide and fertile valley, intersected by rushing water-courses; and richly clothed with forests of palmettos, mesquits, and cacti; then the road ascends the face of an abrupt hill, where for some distance it follows along upon its crest, and again descends to the plain;—thus, at every mile of the march, presenting a new feature of the landscape, till, as the setting sun empurples the western skies, and gilds with his farewell rays the lofty spires, we come to a halt, and encamp for the night, by the rocky stream of Papa Gallios.

The next day, passing by the ruins of what, before the passage of the Vandal colonel, was the beautiful village of Ramos, and where, for the first time, the

enemy showed himself on the advance of General Taylor upon Monterey, we come to the little city of Marin. But if too early to encamp at this place, we can proceed on to the Rio Salinas. If still the sun is two hours above the mountains, we have time to reach Agua Frio; and, encamping by its purer waters, obtain among the friendly villagers a good supper of *chile con carne* and *tortillas*; and, if we choose, may spread our blankets upon cowhides under the shelter of palm-thatched cottages. We have now before us, for to-morrow, six leagues over a good road, and frequent water, which brings us to *El Bosque de Santo Domingo*,—the headquarter camp of our brave old commander;—from whence, to the city of Monterey, it is but a pleasant little ride of less than one and a half leagues.

CHAPTER XVIII.

An Old Adage.—The Soldier, and other Components of an Army.—Gamblers.—Their Implements and Expedients.—Sporting Swell turns Teamster.—He proceeds to Business.—A Scene in Camp.—The Gamblers sometimes check-mated.—The Story of Little Red.—Sergeant K.—The Game of Monte.—The Sergeant in Luck.—One more Antie.—Free Whisky.—The Luck takes a Turn.—“Cleaned out.”—Arrive at Camargo.—The Sergeant has the Damps.—The Pledge.—The Surprise.—The Farewell.

THE old, homely adage—“It takes all sorts of people to make a world”—may, with very little alteration, be applied to the composition of an army in the field;—for, truly, it takes many varieties of men, to make up its complete organization.

The soldier,—he who carries a knapsack strapped to his back, like Pilgrim’s load of sin; and the musket upon his shoulder, with the cotton haversack—the receptacle of the day’s scanty fare—under the left arm;—who, in regular routine, takes his turn at guard-mounting, and fatigue duty;—who has neither will nor soul of his own, but must yield in slavish obedience to the tyrant, Discipline;—whose law is the whim or caprice of some petty upstart

officer;—who, at the word of command, must unflinchingly bare his breast to the iron storm of the battle, and pour out his life-blood without a murmur:—this man is but one ingredient that goes to make up the unit of an army.

There are the numerous employés of the quartermaster and commissary departments,—the artisans, the teamsters and mule-drivers; the clerks, factotums, and servants; the contractors, speculators, and letter-writers; as well as the blacklegs, whisky-sellers and pickpockets, with their coadjutors, the courtezans of the camp;—all these elements form important components of the great whole.

The last-named gentry, in our army, did not confine their operations to the garrisoned towns, and the permanent camps; but were frequently found accompanying the trains, as they passed to and from our dépôts,—often in the capacity of teamsters.

In some secret corner of their wagons, the monte-bank, the faro-box, and the roulette-cloth, with its gilded figures and emblazoned eagle, the keno-urn, — or the wheel of fortune, were snugly stowed away, side by side with the whisky-keg;—to be placed in tempting array upon the tail-boards of their wagons on arriving at the first camping-ground for

the night. These men could accommodate themselves to any change of circumstances, or any ostensible occupations, in order to carry on their game of plucking the poor soldier.

One would hardly recognize in the unkempt, coarsely dressed, and dirt-and-tar-begrimed teamster, mounted on the high mule of the rear span, and vociferously yelling to the little leader, as he springs to the ascent of the hill,—the over-dressed and Frenchified swell, he had observed dealing the cards at the richly-laden monte-table of the “*Dos Amigos*,” the evening previous. Yet it is the same man. The long, and, in spite of the dirt, which would disguise them, the delicate and supple fingers of the dealer are now all that remain, by which he may be identified.

Yesterday, the troops were paid off a long-due installment, and, as a large escort accompanies the train, with the money in their pockets, our “professional gentleman” dons his teamster’s suit, and presents himself at the office of the quartermaster for a “berth.” His partners attend to “business” in the town and at the camp, while he follows, to attend to their mutual interest on the road.

At night, after his team is stripped, watered, and fed, and his own supper of fried bacon and army-bread is hastily disposed of,—he prepares for busi-

ness. First, his private corner is examined;—the whisky-keg is unrolled from the folds of blankets, which have protected it from the close inspection of the wagon-master, and deposited in some convenient place; as it is to perform an important function during the performances of the night. Then, if the night is calm, two empty porter-bottles are called into requisition, to hold each a stump of a sperm candle. These are placed upon the ground, under the cover of some friendly clump of bushes, which would hide the light from that part of the camp occupied by the commanding officer of the escort. The tail-board of the wagon is now unhinged, and laid upon the ground between the lights;—a pack of Spanish cards, prepared beforehand, is placed upon the board, in little piles symmetrically arranged, with “*caballo*,” “*rey*,” “*corona*,” and “*espada*” uppermost. The dealer, seating himself, with his legs doubled under him, and a bandanna handkerchief spread before him, on which is piled, in tempting array, his golden “bank,”—now makes proclamation of—“*free whisky to any gentleman who feels disposed to risk a quarter on a game, at which any one may easily make a fortune!*”

Men, whose money weighs heavily in their pockets, and whose dusty palates long for the whisky,

soon gather around the gambler. Down goes the money on the cards, and the whisky down the thirsty throats.

As the fiery "rotgut" inflames the brain, the betters become more reckless; and their "anties" increase from quarters, to halves, and dollars. The dealer understands his business;—he is a good judge of human nature, and knows who to "clean out" at once,—and so dismiss half wild with the wretched liquor and his losses;—and who to amuse, and play with, as the cat toys with her little captive before she swallows him. The game vacillates and vibrates up and down the scale of luck;—the better now losing, now winning, now gaining stake after stake. The dealer damns the cards, swears that fortune is against him, and calls for a new deal to change the luck. The new deal is made, and still the lucky better rakes down the silver. Emboldened by success, he now ventures an eagle. The cool, unexcitable gambler scarcely condescends to notice the gold; but, as luck *would* have it, it slips into the bank. There was no cheating—that the better could observe;—it was all fair,—only a turn of luck. He tries it again; and again he loses; and still loses, with an occasional turn in his favor. By this time, the game, with the help of the free whisky, becomes exciting; the better will make or break;

down goes his entire pile on "kavallo;" the dealer makes a careless slang remark, while a close observer might detect a half-expressed smile of exultation on his skinny lips; and up comes the "woman;"—the soldier is "cleaned out!" Cursing his *luck*, and more than half-crazed with the excitement of the liquor and the play, he seeks his blanket, from which he is soon aroused by the shrill, sleep-banishing notes of the reveille.

Sometimes, however, these fellows find their match,—Greek meets Greek,—and, with all their cunning in the deal, the tables are turned upon them;—the "bank is burst,"—they are "cleaned out." All who took part in the campaign on our line, are familiar with the story of "Little Red, the lucky Teamster," as he was called in the train. The story is a good one, and I will relate it.

Little Red had belonged to some volunteer regiment, whose term of service expiring, had returned home. But he chose to remain with the army; and as quarter-master's men were in demand, and good pay was offered, he applied to a wagon-master and obtained the place of a teamster in a train. He soon attracted attention throughout the train, by his diminutive form, which was always enveloped in a red flannel shirt, much too large for him, and by the cleanly and sleek condition of his mules. It

was here he obtained the cognomen by which he was known along the line, and even on the muster rolls of the head wagon-master.

Little Red had amused himself by observing the tricks of the gamblers, and occasionally trying his hand, till he at length fancied he had hit upon a scheme, by which he could not only play a good hand himself, but, by following up his system, might be able to break the bank. He chose to try his plan, at first with the Mexican gamblers, as Yankee shrewdness could readily cope with Mexican knavery. He was successful, and won largely. Having now a good "bank" of his own, he essayed the more skillful American gamblers, and with equal success. He had now won several thousand dollars.

One night, while betting at monte, at the "Dos Amigos," his Mexican lady-love,—for Little Red, as fortune had favored him, was inclined to indulge in the luxury of an *amante*,—entered the saloon, and, gently tapping him on the cheek, with her fan, motioned him to a private interview; when she informed him of an attempt that would be made, by a party of Mexicans, to murder and rob him, that night, as he should leave the saloon, on his way to her house. He treated the matter lightly, but promised to be on his guard.

During the evening his usual good fortune at-

tended him ; and when he left the house, it was with his pockets heavy with the gold of the dealer's bank.

He had nearly reached the residence of his *amante*, which was not far from the *Puente de la Virgen*, when he was suddenly confronted by half a dozen Mexican desperadoes, with their drawn knives gleaming in the moonlight. Little Red was prepared for them, and drawing a revolver from under his shirt, braced himself against the wall, and began to lay the greasers about him. He shot three dead upon the spot, and winged two others. The sixth cut-throat, finding the American more than his match, was glad to make his escape unhurt.

The affair was noised over the city, on the following morning.

Colonel E. was in command of the city at that time, and had an unlimited authority in matters of police, and the dispensation of laws of his own creation. He was so desirous to do justice to the Mexicans, that he often over-reached the point, and was actually guilty of acts of great injustice to his own countrymen.

The gallant defense which Little Red had made, and which was deserving of much commendation, was represented to the officer, by the friends and comrades of the assassins, as a wholesale and unprovoked murder.

The young man was immediately arrested; and, without being permitted to give a correct explanation of the affair, was loaded with heavy irons, and dispatched to the camp,—to accompany a train of wagons, which was to leave next day for Camargo; from whence, he was ordered to be shipped to New Orleans. This was the mode of disposing of such persons as became repugnant to the temporary and tyrannous commandants of the town.

Little Red begged for the privilege of returning to the house of the Mexican woman, to whose keeping every cent of his money had been intrusted. This reasonable request was refused,—and, without a dime in his pocket, he was hurried out of the country.

On arriving at New Orleans, his irons were knocked off, and he was turned out on the levee, entirely destitute; with not even the means of obtaining a breakfast.

Wandering thoughtfully along the levee, Little Red observed a vessel loading for the Rio Grande. He went on board, and telling his story to the captain, solicited the favor of working his passage for the voyage. The captain, being a genuine, warm-hearted sailor, was struck with the ingenuousness of the young man, and the evident injustice of his treatment;—he not only offered him a free passage,

but advanced him money to purchase a respectable suit of clothes, and invited him to make the vessel his home while she remained in port. After arriving at Matamoras, the captain further furnished him with the means to reach Camargo ; from whence, he reached Monterey, with a returning train ; having been absent some four weeks. In the mean time, a change had occurred in the administration of justice in the city, and he could return unmolested.

The most remarkable part of the story, however, is yet to be told. Little Red lost no time in finding the residence of his Mexican friend,—who received him joyfully. She was a poor girl, in most indigent circumstances ; and had not yet consoled herself with a new lover. Yet she had not touched a *claco* of the fifteen thousand dollars, which he had intrusted to her keeping ! but returned the bag of gold, in precisely the same condition she had buried it, on the morning of his arrest. Little Red generously rewarded the faithful custodian of his treasure, by pressing upon her acceptance one-third of his winnings ;—with a portion of which, he purchased her a comfortable home in San Francisco,—and eschewing gambling for the future, returned, soon after, to his friends, somewhere in Tennessee.

On one occasion, I was accompanying a train escort, and we had encamped at the stream of Papa

Gallios. There was, along with us, Sergeant K., of the 16th regiment, one of the new levies. The Sergeant had served with the 1st Ohio regiment, and was at the taking of Monterey. He had returned home, and afterwards enlisted in the new regiment,—and was now again on his return home, on a sick furlough. Being, as he expressed it, but a passenger, and without a mess, I had invited him to join with me, and share my tent.

As usual, a monte-dealer had opened his bank, and was calling upon the votaries of fortune, to sacrifice at her shrine.

The Sergeant, observing that, as he had not money enough to take him home, he would try his luck at the game. Accordingly, he left me, and wended his way towards the circle, which had gathered around the gambler. I turned into my blankets, and soon forgot all things about me, in pleasant dreams of home.

About midnight the sergeant returned with his handkerchief filled with gold; I should think from its weight, he had over a thousand dollars.

“Here doctor!” said he; “I am in luck to-night; I’ve almost burst up that fellow’s bank!”

“How much have you won?” I asked carelessly,—for, in fact, I was too sleepy to take much interest in his good luck.

“I don’t know exactly;—but as he had about fifteen hundred dollars in his bank, and the other boys were not betting much,—and there is but a precious little of it left, I should think I’ve about got the fellow’s pile! By heavens!—I’ll return, and make a finish of him!”

“But sergeant! come back a moment,—a word with you before you go—”

“Well! what is it!—Talk fast,” said he. “He’s playing against luck, and if I don’t get back soon, the boys will have used him up. One or two anties more, and I’ll not leave a dollar in his bank.”

I perceived that the free whisky of the gambler was doing its work on the brain of the sergeant; and, knowing that the knave would soon have the advantage of him, and carry the *good luck* over to the bank, I persuaded him to deposit a portion of his winnings with me, as he would not require a very heavy stake to finish the game, now so near its close.

“By Jove! You’re right, old fellow!” said he—“help yourself;—but don’t be greedy,—leave me enough to finish him up genteelly.”

He laid the handkerchief again upon my blanket,—and, gathering up several handful of the heaviest pieces, I slipped them under my bedding. It was too dark for him to observe how frequently my

hands returned to the charge;—but at last, growing impatient, he snatched up what remained, and returned to the work.

But it seemed that in his brief absence, the fickle goddess had deserted her friends of the earlier hours of the night, and had now gone over to the dealer. His pile had evidently increased.

“I go an eagle on the ‘corona’” cried the sergeant,—as he threw the gold piece on the pile of papers that picture represented, and watched the run of the cards. The espada won, and the ten dollars were added to the bank.

“Well, then; here’s two eagles more on the horse!” But the horse, too, had become unlucky, and carried the gold to the wrong side of the board. Again and again the sergeant sees his gold pieces swallowed up in the all-devouring bank.

A fresh application to the free drink, and he, determined to recover the ground he has lost, now ventures ten eagles on a card. The banker coolly shuffles off his papers,—his own lucky card turns up, and he gathers the money to his own pile.

So the game continued, till the sergeant had lost the last piece I had left in his handkerchief. Again he returned to me, much excited, and demanded the whole of the money I had retained. He was confi-

dent he could yet break the bank. I saw it was useless to endeavor to dissuade him from further ventures against the cunning gambler; he was now in for it, and nothing short of the loss of the last cent he possessed would recall him to reason. I, therefore, pretended to hand over to him the whole of what remained of his money; but really reserving more than the half of it.

As the guards were being relieved for the last time in the morning, the sergeant returned, and entering the tent, awoke me with the request for the loan of an eagle or so.

“Hillo! is that you, sergeant?”

“Yes!” said he,—in a half serious, half comical tone of voice—“what is left of me,—can’t you lend me a few anties against that damned monte-dealer?”

“What, my dear fellow! has the luck gone the wrong way, at last?”

“Yes! yes!—That monte-fellow is the very devil for luck;—he has cleaned me out completely—not even left me a dime for morning bitters. I am not alone, however;—he has whipped out the crowd. Why! would you believe it,—that fellow has won over three thousand dollars to-night!”

I consoled the poor fellow, with the assurance that I might have told him as much;—and showed

him the folly of not remaining content with what he had won in the early part of the night.

“But come, now,—a truce to preaching;—lend me ten dollars.”

“No, Sergeant, you have lost enough already; and I will not loan you a cent. Lie down, and get a nap;—’tis almost reveille time.”

“Well, then, here goes for it;” and, stretching himself upon the blankets, he was soon snoring like a high-pressure steamboat.

On our arrival at Camargo, we found the steamboat “Rough and Ready” fired up, and ready to start down the river to Matamoras. My friend, the Sergeant, hastened to the office of the quartermaster, and obtained his transportation papers; and, on his return, came to bid me good-by, with a very lugubrious expression of countenance.

“Doctor!” said he, “it’s likely I may never see you again;—but would it be too great a favor to ask of an old friend,—the loan—of—say—five—dollars, or so? It’s a long way between here and Ohio,—and you know I’ve not the first red cent for the—extras!”

“Well, Sergeant,” said I, “promise me, upon the honor of a soldier, that you will not bet a dollar of it upon monte, or any other game, and I will advance you money enough to take you home like a gentle-

man, and something handsome left when you get there."

"I'll promise you anything you ask, my friend," said he, grasping my hand; "but I will be grateful for a small amount; five or ten dollars is all I will accept."

"But do I understand you to accede to my terms?"

"Yes, yes! doctor; I promise, upon the honor of a gentleman,—not only, not to bet on a card, during my voyage home, but never again to indulge in the vicious and ungentlemanly practice—so help me—heaven!"

"Enough said, Sergeant!—here, hold out your hands,—both of them,—so, there;"—and I proceeded to count out leisurely, piece after piece, the gold I had pocketed of his winnings,—till I had piled upon his outstretched palms over six hundred dollars.

He stood lost in amazement, till I had counted out the last eagle;—then, dropping his hands, and scattering a golden shower of doubloons, eagles, and double eagles, upon the ground at our feet, refused to accept a single dollar, till I had explained the mystery. When I at last bade him farewell, he was in comfortable possession of one of the best state-rooms of the "Rough and Ready."

I have never since met the Sergeant ;—but, if this book should chance to meet his eye, he will, no doubt, smile to see himself “in print,” and pardon a friend of the olden times for the liberty he has taken with him.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Night call on the Guerrillas.—The Mexicans avoid the Watering-places.—A hard Circumstance.—Mexicans carry their Water with them.—Accompanying the Train.—The Heat and Dust.—Ride ahead.—The Halt.—No Supper.—The Night Ride.—Old Campaigners.—Colonel Louis P. Cook.—Mr. Clemens.—Close upon a Mexican Camp.—The Consultation.—The Plan adopted.—The Challenge.—“*Tejanos!*” —The Alarm.—The Rush through the Camp.—Arrive at Punta Aguda.—The Ride continued.—The Mystery.—Its Explanation.—A new Fact.—The Morning.—A beautiful Landscape.—The Turkey-call.—Its Effects.—Bagging the Game.—The Bells of Mier.

THE Mexican cavalry forces, of Urrea's and Canales' commands, as well as the guerrillas, in passing over the main-traveled thoroughfares along our line, most piously avoided the streams and water-holes, when bivouacking for the night.

They had, on a number of occasions, paid somewhat dearly for occupying those convenient halting-places, which we had appropriated to our own use.

When comfortably bestowing themselves by their camp-fires for the night, after a hard day's ride, their suppers simmering over the embers, making the air fragrant with their savory ingredients, and

“whetting the keen edge of hunger ;”—their horses stripped, and disposed of, amongst the thickets ;—and the calm starlight night full of promises of kind repose ;—thus comfortably disposed, it was anything but agreeable, to be suddenly disturbed by the unannounced arrival of a company of Rangers, or some other party of *Americanos*, who unceremoniously claimed, not only the possession of the ground, but “of all the goods, chattels, and appurtenances thereunto attached,”—as well as taking unwarrantable liberties with the persons of the occupants !

They had frequently been thus surprised ;—and therefore, for the future, being taught discretion by sad experience, they avoided altogether the watering-places along the road,—carrying their water along with them in skins ; and bivouacking on high ground, at a distance from the streams, were less liable to be intruded upon by their enemies.

It was a sultry afternoon, and the progress of the train I was accompanying might be traced from the distant heights by the heavy columns of yellow dust, which ascended from it, as it poured along over the parched roads. We had left Cerralvo that morning, and proposed encamping at night at Chicharrones.

What with the heat of the day, and the inhaling of the impalpable dust, with which the air was

loaded, we found it extremely unpleasant traveling in the crowded ranks of the escort. I, therefore, proposed to Colonel Louis P. Cook, of Texas, and one or two other gentlemen, to ride in advance, and reach the camping-ground before night; and thus escape the dust and confusion of the train and escort.

We accordingly started ahead,—a party of four of us;—and reached Chicharrones while the sun was yet some hours high. A train, which had preceded us, had left the place the same morning; and we found an ample supply of provender, which it had left behind, and with which our horses were plentifully supplied.

As for ourselves, we should have to fast till the arrival of the train; and having nothing else to amuse ourselves with, after attending to the wants of our animals, we spread our blankets under the sheltering shade of the trees, and yielded to the gentle wooing of nature's sweet restorer. When we awoke, the broad disk of the sun was sinking behind the western *sierras*. The train had not come up; nor could we hear the most distant sounds of its approach. Concluding that, forced by the heat of the day, it had halted at another resting-place, we began to become troubled about the prospect for supper,—as we had fasted since early morning.

Our horses, however, had been well fed and refreshed; and the Colonel proposed that we should remount, and ride on as far as Punta Aguda,—about five leagues ahead,—where we might arrive at an early hour of the night, and obtain refreshments among the rancheros there.

This arrangement was adopted; so, saddling up, and strapping on our blankets, we sallied into the road again, for a night-ride to the next usual stage of train-travel.

The night was clear, and comfortably cool; and as the dew, falling heavily, partially laid the dust, we found the riding much pleasanter than it had been during the sultry hours of the day.

Our horses, also, experienced the benefit of the change, and moved over the ground with elastic steps. There was no moon; but the stars gleamed brightly, and gave light enough to make the outlines of surrounding objects distinctly visible. The road, most of the way, was over an unoccupied portion of the country, thickly covered with chaparral.

The ride was made cheerful with conversation; and as all my companions were "Old Texians," they had many amusing incidents of campaign-life to relate. Colonel Cook had been a prominent actor in the early history of the Republic. He had

figured largely as an Indian fighter; and carried an evidence of his acquaintance with the Camanches, in an ugly scar, made by an arrow-head, which, crashing through the cheek bone, had entered his right eye, tearing it completely from the socket.

One of the other gentlemen, Mr. Clemens, had been an officer of the little navy of the State; and, with Commodore Moore, had taken part in the engagement with the Mexican squadron off Tampico;—so that the night wore swiftly away, with the recital of the incidents of those times;—and, ere we were aware of it, we had nearly accomplished the five leagues to Punta Aguda.

We were on the last league of the stretch, when the Colonel, who was giving me a detailed account of the affair of Goliad, suddenly checked his horse, and, giving utterance to a low, but expressive “*shirr!*” called us to a halt.

“Gentlemen!” he exclaimed, “we are close upon a Mexican camp!”

I saw neither the loom of a camp-fire, nor heard any sound of life, save our own low voices, and the breathings of our horses. The thickets were quiet and voiceless, as if the silence of death brooded over them. It was at that hour of the night, when even the insect voices of the woods were hushed in repose. Other senses, therefore, than those of

sight and hearing, were necessary, to detect the vicinity of the enemy.

“They cannot be more than a quarter of a mile distant, if they are so far as that,” said he. “Some one hold my horse, and while you remain here, I will go ahead and reconnoitre.”

He left us, and proceeding cautiously and silently along the road, was soon lost to our sight, in the deep shadow of the chaparral. After an absence of a few minutes, he returned, with the intelligence that a large party of guerrillas had encamped immediately across the road, on the rising ground ahead, and had kindled their little, Indian-like fires, directly in the dust of the path. He had approached within a few yards of the sentinel; who, apparently, more than half asleep, was leaning, carelessly, in the forks of a low mesquit tree.

“Well, Colonel! what do you propose? Shall we have to back out, and return? or, cannot we pick our way through the thickets, and get into the road again, ahead of these fellows?”

“No, gentlemen! That is out of the question. Not even a cat, with the light of day, could pick her way through this wall of prickly pears, and thorny bushes;—much less could we force our horses through it, in this darkness!”

“What, then, is your plan?” I inquired of the

Colonel. "It, certainly, will never do to turn back,—and it is also out of the question to pass the night where we are."

"You are right, Doctor!" returned he. "We will charge through their camp,—yelling like a legion of devils; and so, taking them by surprise, we may possibly cut our way through, Scot free. They will, no doubt, mistake us for an advanced picket of a large party; and will be too intent upon their own safety, to pursue us. What say you, gentlemen, to my plan?"

"Agreed! let us make a rush!" was the response which met the Colonel's proposition;—and so, dismounting, we busied ourselves for a moment, in tightening our saddle-girths, and examining the condition of our fire-arms. The Colonel had a fowling-piece, and he now dropped, into each tube of it, a bullet, in addition to its ordinary charge of buck-shot.

All now being ready, we remounted, and rode slowly along, till we found we had excited the attention of the sentinel. The "click" of his carbine-lock fell distinctly on our ears,—followed by the short, abrupt challenge:

"*Quien vive?*"

"*Soldados!*"

"*Quien soldados?*"

“*Tejanos! Alerta, ladrones!*”* fiercely roared out the Colonel;—and striking his rowels deeply into the flanks of his horse, and yelling like a wild Camanche, he led the way through the midst of the half awake and terrified guerrillas. The sentinel was so completely dumfounded by our sudden assault, that we had passed him some distance, before he recovered himself sufficiently to give the alarm.

Yelling at the top of our lungs, we dashed along the road,—scattering the fire-brands beneath the feet of our plunging animals,—upsetting cooking utensils,—bursting water-skins,—trampling over the prostrate forms of the sleepers,—knocking down, or leaping over those who were endeavoring to spring to their arms,—discharging our revolvers right and left,—and, altogether, creating a most astounding excitement throughout the astonished camp! On we spurred, like a fresh arrival from Pandemonium;—shouting back to some imaginary host following in our wake;—and making the night hideous by our unearthly noises;—the very chaparral was startled by the unusual sounds.

The guerrillas, taken completely by surprise, and looking for the onslaught of a fresh charge, from

* “Texians! Look out, you thieves!”



the direction we had come, paid but little regard to us, after we had passed their camp;—and but a few hasty and badly-aimed shots were sent after us, as we descended the hill, and left them in our rear.

We now soon arrived at the ruined *ranch*o of Punta Aguda, among whose falling and fire-stained walls still remained one or two families of its former occupants, with whom we had intended to stop for rest and refreshment. But we had aroused a hornet's nest,—and prudence required that we should keep the road. It was a long stretch to Mier; but we determined to push on to that place, where we could await the arrival of the train, and give our over-ridden animals time to recover from the night's work.

It was still a matter of mystery to me, by what means the Texian Colonel had discovered our proximity to the camp of the guerrillas, and, riding up to his side, I asked for an explanation.

“*I smelt them!*” said he.

“You mean, I presume, that you scented the smoke of their fires, or their cookery.”

“No!” he replied. “I detected the peculiar scent of the Mexicans,—in the same way that experience has taught me to know the vicinity of the Camanche Indian. It is a faculty I have acquired,—perhaps,

as a dog acquires the habit of following the game by his nose;—or, as any Texian boy readily knows, when he is approaching the spot where coils the venomous rattlesnake.”

This was a new fact to me; but I learned, subsequently, while I was a resident for a brief period in Texas, that the old Indian fighters, and hunters of the country, were almost all possessed of this faculty; and could often follow certain scents, as unerringly as a well-trained hound.

The hours of night glided unnoted away, as we rode leisurely along; occasionally halting to breathe our horses, and let them crop a mouthful of the luxuriant mesquit grass, that grew by the side of the path, where the thickets did not intrude; and, at length, as the shadows of night were chased away by the approaching day, the landscape gradually revealed itself; and far away, down the long reach of the tortuous road, which ran along a descending plain, loomed up the church-towers, and white walls of the little town of Mier. Beyond, in the rear of the town, flowed the bright waters of the Salinas, soon to unite with the Rio Grande; while the far-off mountains filled up the back-ground of the landscape.

When the sun, dissipating the vapors, had risen clear and bright above the horizon, he lighted up

the deep green of the chaparral,—sparkling with the brilliant dew-drops pendant from their leaves, and presented a picture, whose rich coloring would have made a study for an artist. Claude Lorraine, in moments of his brightest inspiration, had never conceived a picture of such surpassing beauty as that which now lay stretched before our eyes.

The Colonel was riding a short distance ahead, with one leg thrown carelessly over the pommel of his saddle, apparently lost in admiration of the scene before us; and, at the same time, amusing himself by mimicking the “cluck” of the wild turkey hen. Presently, to his own surprise, as well as ours, the responsive signal of a male bird was heard in the depths of the chaparral. Again the imitative sounds were made, and again replied to. A cock-turkey had been deceived by the “counterfeit notes,” as the Colonel termed them, and was evidently approaching the road ahead of us. Dismounting from his horse, and throwing his bridle over the pommel of my saddle, and remarking that “we were good for a breakfast of turkey that morning,” the Colonel motioned us to halt, while he walked on ahead. Still repeating the call, and receiving the answering “gobble-gobble” of the excited bird, he chose a position under the cover of a thick clump of nopal leaves, and awaited his approach. Nearer and nearer

came the answering sounds ;—till, presently, there emerged into the open road, a short distance in advance of the hunter, a beautiful cock-turkey,—or “gobbler,” as he is termed in the South,—leading in his train a convoy of hens, whose sleek feathers reflected, in many changing hues, the light of the morning rays.

For an instant, the polished tubes gleamed among the green, fleshy leaves of the spiky nopals ;—the hunter leaned his head low down, to bring his one keen organ to range along the bright iron, and pressing the triggers of both locks, almost simultaneously,—a flash and report,—and three noble birds lay on the ground before him. The remaining birds, terrified by the explosion, and the momentary struggles of their mates, stretch their necks, and gaze for an instant in the direction of the shot ; then uttering wild notes of alarm, rise disorderly from the ground, and whirring away over the chaparral, are rapidly lost to sight. The birds are strapped to our saddle-bows, and we resume our ride.

We had arrived within about a mile of Mier, when the bells of the cathedral rung out upon the calm morning air, in silvery tones, the music of the *oraciones*—calling all within their mellow sounds to morning prayers. These bells of Mier have long been noted for their peculiar sweetness and clear-

ness of tones. They were cast in old Spain, and brought to the country more than a century and a half ago,—and for a hundred years had sent forth their silvery voices from the towers of some old Jesuit mission, calling the Indians from flocks and fields, to tell their beads before the shrine of some painted saint.

Now those sweet notes were borne to our stranger ears, over the undulating chaparral, like words of welcome,—suggestive alike to us, and our wearied animals, of a good breakfast and comfortable quarters for the day.

CHAPTER XX.

Aunt Phyllis.—A Good Breakfast.—Camanche Indians.—Their Depredations.—They receive a Damper.—A Sad Incident.—“Mal del Corazon.”—Rejoining the Train.—Indians Burn a Rancho.—The Rescue.—The Kentuckian.—His Carbine Shot.—Its Effect.—The Withdrawal of the Indians.

WE remained at Mier, till noon of the next day, awaiting the coming up of the train. We had found agreeable quarters at the house of a mulatto woman—Aunt Phyllis, as she was called;—a refugee from a Louisiana cotton plantation. She, with her husband, also a mulatto, and several children, had been residents of the place for several years. She now kept a sort of hotel for the accommodation of the passing Americans;—and was regarded in the town as one of its most respectable and well-to-do citizens.

Aunt Phyllis soon prepared us a truly American breakfast, in which fried turkey-steak, and most excellent coffee, formed important features. Our night's ride, and twenty-four hours' fasting, had put our stomachs in preparation to do full justice to the

delicious cookery of our kind hostess. Soon after a hearty meal, we spread our blankets under the shade of the garden trees, and sought the repose our weary limbs demanded.

We learned that the Camanches had just made an assault upon the neighboring ranchos ; and were now threatening even the town of Mier.

These marauding savages have always been the pest of the country ;—and their annual raids are the terror of the people. The villages and ranchos are frequently laid in ashes,—the men and women massacred,—and the young girls ravished, and carried off to their haunts among the mountains ; where they are subjected to the most inhuman captivity.

The large towns, even, are not exempt from their visitations ; for the name of Camanche or Apache carries with it a prestige of most fearful import ;—and the cowardly half-breed Mexicans, paralyzed by the cry of “*Indio !*” have rarely been known to make a stand against them. They have, therefore, in a great degree, overrun the country unmolested. Even during our occupation of the country, they made inroads, and attacked the defenseless *rancheros*, almost within sight of our encampments ; supposing, till they were taught different, that they were doing us a good turn.

The first damper which these fellows received,

was administered to them by Walter Lane, with his battalion of Texas Rangers, near Parras,—a considerable town among the mountains, beyond Saltillo.

The Camanches had come down upon that place, on a horse-stealing raid. But Lane and his men, having been some weeks in idleness, were glad of a chance to meet their old enemies;—and, besides, being on friendly terms with the people of the place, the more readily undertook its defense. They fell upon the Indians, and killed nearly one-half of their numbers.

Cerralvo and Mier had often suffered from their depredations. On one occasion, I remember, while at the former place, a poor, melancholy, half-crazed creature called upon me, at my hospital, and begged me most earnestly to prescribe for her.

“*Señor Medico!*” said she,—“I am sick!—and have been so a long time! Cannot you give me a *remedio?*”

She was a stranger to me,—but I perceived by the wild, haggard, and prematurely-aged expression of her face, that her disease was of the mind; and not one that medicine could reach.

“What is your sickness? If it is such as lies within the province of my skill, I will cheerfully do what I can for you.”

“Oh, señor,” replied she, with a melancholy smile

creeping over the deep lines of her face, "*tengo mal del corazon*!"—(I have the *sickness of the heart*!)

She then went on to inform me that, some three winters before, the Camanches had attacked the place, and, killing her husband, among others of the citizens, had carried off into captivity her two only daughters—young girls of ten and twelve years of age. Whether they were dead, or still lingering in hopeless slavery, and subject to the brutal treatment of their heartless captors, the poor woman could not know. This cruel uncertainty was what increased the *mal del corazon*;—and, in the utter simplicity of her stricken heart, she really fancied that I could—

"minister to a mind diseased,—
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet, oblivious antidote,
Cleanse her stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighed upon her heart."

But, like Macbeth's physician—"the disease was beyond my practice;"—and I dismissed her with the commiserating hope, that time might, in some measure, assuage the anguish of the childless mother's broken heart.

This was but one, of many similar cases, which came to my knowledge, while at Cerralvo. In some

instances entire families had been carried off into irredeemable and hopeless captivity.

We now rejoined the escort, and once more resumed the march towards Camargo. We had been about an hour on the road, when, on ascending an eminence, we came in sight of the ranchito of Guardao, on the bank of the Rio Grande.

Dense columns of smoke were bursting from the combustible materials of the thatched roofs;—which were quickly tinged with scarlet and white;—and, in another moment, the little hamlet was enveloped in the fiery embraces of the devouring element!—The Indians were at their infernal work!

A portion of the escort consisted of mounted men, among whom were several Kentucky cavalry men, and a number of Texian Rangers, of Captain Reed's company.

These were immediately ordered to spur ahead to the relief of the rancheros. Col. Cook and myself had already started in advance; and, putting our horses to their speed, soon arrived at the burning rancho.

The Indians, seeing our approach, as we sped towards them along the descending ground, dashed into the river, and made good their escape, by placing it between us and themselves.

The rapid stream not being fordable, we were

unable to pursue them. Their little Camanche horses took to the water like spaniels;—and by the time we had arrived at the margin of the current, on our side, they were ascending with their wild riders, up the steep bank of the other,—where they were all quickly concealed behind the heavy chaparral.

The rancheros had discovered the approach of their enemies, in time to escape to the thickets; leaving their homes, and all they contained, to be destroyed by their ruthless invaders.

The Texians proposed to cross the river higher up the stream, and give them a fight; but that could not be done, without leaving the train unprotected, and upon reflection, the idea of attacking the Indians was abandoned.

I had ridden into the stream, to water my horse, and was followed by a Kentuckian, for the same purpose. He carried the usual carbine, suspended by a broad belt from his shoulder, and hanging under the left arm. It was the breech-loading, short-barreled weapon, such as had been recently adopted in the army; and had been furnished to the volunteer cavalry, as well as the regular dragoons. Some of the new Ranger companies had adopted them;—but the earlier Texas volunteers preferred the old backwoods rifle, or the six-shooting revolver,

and refused to use them, asserting that they were of too short a range for efficiency.

While our animals were drinking, an Indian presented himself on the edge of the opposite bank; and, presuming upon the distance, amused himself, by turning his back to us, and going through a variety of insulting pantomimes; then facing about and, snapping the thong of his bow, as if threatening to try its force upon us. The river at this point widened out into a broad expanse, with its surface broken by sand-bars and little grassy islands, so that the distance from bank to bank was nearly half a mile.

Had I a good rifle, I should have planted a bullet into his tawny hide for his impudence.

The Kentuckian, observing my impatience and sharing it, unslung his carbine, and applying a new cap, quietly observed—

“I reckon I can put a stop to that fellow’s sport! They do say,” continued he, “that these carbines won’t shoot! This one, however, did *some* good service at Buena Vista, if I’m not mistaken. But there, you remember, sir, the distances were too short to prove their qualities. Now, here’s for a trial at a long shot, at yonder red devil!”

So saying, he brought the stock of his short gun to his cheek; and drawing a bead upon the naked

back of the savage, pressed the trigger. The Indian gave one wild, ringing yell, and springing into the air, as I have seen a buck do, when shot to the heart, he pitched head first, down the bank, into the muddy current below!

“There!” drily observed the Kentuckian, as he coolly proceeded to wipe out the empty tube, “I reckon *that gun* will pass! I’d like to see one of your old-fashioned rifles beat *that*! I tell ye what stranger! that old red skin will burn no more ranchos—*this* side of Jordan!”

This was the last we heard of the Camanches, while we remained in the country. Finding that the Americans were not disposed to permit their depredations upon the ranchos, they returned to their hunting ranges, to await the withdrawal of our army; when, no doubt, they renewed their hostilities, with still greater atrocities than before, if such were possible.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Guerrillas molest our Trains.—Jésus Romero.—His Generous Conduct to the Ranger.—Expedition against his Party.—Directions.—Dismiss the Guide.—A Wild Region.—The Valleys of the Sierra Madre.—Lose the Trail.—Find Another.—Night overtakes us.—“A Rancho!”—A mistake.—The Corral.—Water.—A Picturesque Group.—Lonely Situation.—The Dutchman and the Wolves.—Coyotes.—Signs of Humanity.—An Oral Phenomenon.—The same experienced on the Mustang Deserts.—Unlike the Mirage.—How Accounted for.—Watering our Horses.—The Grama or Mesquit Grass.—We eat our Last Rations.—A Dilemma.—A Ranger assumes the Guidance.—Another Valley.—The San Juan.—Beautiful Variety of Cacti.—The “*Cereus Giganticus*.”—The Encampment.—No Supper.—Armdaillos.—A Delicious Dish.

IN the autumn of 1847, the guerrillas had become numerous; every rancho and village contributing men to swell their ranks.

Our trains were liable at any moment, while in transit, to be attacked by them. They had adopted a system of annoyances, that required the utmost vigilance of our troops, escorting them, to guard against.

They had their hidden rendezvous all along the road, from Camargo to Monterey; and had spies at

every rancho near the route, to give notice of the passage of a train, which, if not strongly escorted, would be pounced upon suddenly, from an unexpected quarter, and a portion of it cut out, and hurried off into the labyrinthian recesses of the chaparral.

They much preferred to waylay the mule-trains; as these were attended, and managed by Mexican *arrieros*, who were more readily intimidated; and the animals, with their *cargoes*, were rapidly hurried out of reach of pursuit.

Among the bands of guerrillas, who occasioned us the most trouble, from their skillfully planned and unexpected attacks, was one under the captaincy of Jesús Romero. This man, *Don Jesús*, as he was called amongst his countrymen, was a *ranchero* of respectable standing, and some wealth, which consisted of droves of horses and black cattle, and flocks of goats. He had been *alcalde* of Cerralvo for several years previous to the war. He was a remarkably fine-looking person;—large and athletic, and having the reputation of being a brave and generous partisan.

In the affair of Manteca, where Baylor was routed by the guerrillas, a ranger belonging to his company, by the name of Jennings, had his horse shot down, while he was endeavoring to escape through the

thickets. He succeeded, however, in secreting himself, till the attacking party had withdrawn;—when, for several days, he wandered through the chaparral, and subsisted on wild tomatoes, and the fruit of the prickly pear. At length he came in sight of a rancho, which he approached. He was received kindly by the people, and furnished with food and clothing;—his own light dress had been torn to shreds among the thorns and cacti of the thickets.

The Texian remained several days among these kind *rancheros*; till Romero, hearing of the circumstance, visited him, and, furnishing him with a good horse, accompanied him to Cerralvo, whence he rejoined the remnant of his company at Monterey.

This brave guerrilla was now causing us a good deal of trouble. But a few days before, he had attacked, and succeeded in getting off with, a portion of an *atajo de mulas* (mule-train), even as it was entering the town, where there were stationed at the time no less than three companies of Rangers, and a battalion of the 16th infantry.

Therefore, as these fellows could not be come at in a fair, open fight, it was determined to hunt them out among the secluded ranchos and mountains, where they were in the habit of rendezvousing;

and, if possible, force them to a fight on their own grounds.

Accordingly, Major Norval, of the 16th infantry, with a portion of Captain Reed's company of Texas Rangers, the "Licking Rangers," from Ohio, a number of the 16th infantry, mounted for the occasion, with a few volunteers, started forth on this expedition.

As this would afford a good opportunity to see a portion of the country never before visited by the Americans, I availed myself of it, and obtained permission to accompany the party.

As far as the village of Ramos, we escorted a large wagon-train, bound to headquarters. At this place we passed the train over to the protection of a party of infantry. Turning off to the right from the main road, we struck into a path which soon brought us to a small rancho, where we pressed into our service one of the people, to act as a guide.

We had formed no definite plan of proceeding, but determined to be governed by circumstances in the pursuit of our search.

There is no doubt, but that a more suitable selection might have been made, in the officer, to whom was intrusted the command of this important expedition. Major Norval was a worthy and brave officer, but altogether inexperienced in bush-craft,

and the habits of guerrillas. He himself had suggested the propriety of making up the party entirely of Texas Rangers, under the command of their own officers. But Lieutenant-Colonel Webb, who commanded the post, aware that the 16th infantry had done nothing since they came to the country, insisted upon one of his own officers heading this party.

We had received information, which led us to believe that Romero, with his band, was in the habit of occupying the ranchos, and water-courses in this part of the country; but as he remained only a short time at any one place, we should depend upon such chance information as we hoped to obtain from the rancheros, whom we should encounter.

Our guide was an old man, and, being on foot, we soon dispensed with his services, as we supposed we should have no difficulty in obtaining another at some neighboring rancho.

The old fellow, on leaving us, gave directions by which, he said, we would soon reach another ranch, where a guide could be found, who was familiar with the whole country.

Said he,—“Follow this trail, till you come to the foot of yonder mountain;—then turn to the right, and follow a very dim trail for about a league

and a half;—this will bring you to a road leading to the rancho. On reaching this road, turn to the left; but, before you reach it, you will cross a stream of clear water. Don't let your horses drink of it, as it flows out of a silver mine, in the mountains, and is poisonous. Follow my directions, señores, and you will have no trouble in reaching the rancho."

We followed the old man's directions to the letter. We reached the foot of the mountain indicated, and turned to the right, along the dim trail. We crossed the stream of water of which we had been cautioned, and, although our animals were in want of water, we dared not let them quench their thirst; but hastened along, anxious to enter the more beaten road, which we expected soon to find. We rode along the dim trail, which passed through a mountain gap, and finally opened upon a barren plain beyond.

Here, instead of leading into a more beaten track, it was soon broken into a number of branching paths, which were finally lost altogether.

We had ridden several leagues, to reach this point, and were now convinced that the knavish old Mexican had deceived us, and intentionally led us off the right course.

We were now in an extremely wild and desolate region. Around us the dark mountains reared their

craggy heads, inclosing a tract of broken land, where the hard, gravelly soil gave birth to a stunted growth of cacti and palmettos, with here and there a clump of thorny *mesquits*, or scraggy *ebona*.

This plateau was many leagues in extent, so far as we could judge from the view we had obtained of it, on crossing a spur of the mountain, over which our path had carried us. The mountains approached each other on either hand; but, as is frequently the case among the valleys of the Sierra Madre, the plain opened a long vista before us, and stretched away in irregular windings, till lost in the distance by an abrupt angle of the parallel ridges.

We were now at a loss what course to pursue. The day was far advanced; and, if we retraced our steps, it would be night, long before we could reach the rancho from whence we had started, and the entire day would have been lost;—we might continue along over the plain, and, doubtless, a trail might be struck, which, following, would lead to some point, from whence we could make a new start on the morrow. At all events, it was important that we should find water, as our horses were now suffering for the want of it.

The Major, therefore, concluded to divide the party, and search for a trail passing over the plain. The party which should discover one, was directed

to give notice by firing a shot ; when we were to reunite again.

A party of Texians soon gave the wished-for signal. They had found a trail, which had been made by cattle ; but it was now so old, that it was impossible to tell which end of it to pursue. A season seemed to have passed, since this path had been traveled over ;—but there was no doubt that, if we fortunately chanced upon the right direction, it would lead us to water at least. We, therefore, determined to follow in the direction which led towards the base of the mountains.

We rode along this path for hours. Gradually it began to assume a wider and more beaten character. Several other and smaller trails were now entering it at various angles ; and we began to congratulate ourselves on approaching a rancho.

Night had overtaken us ; but the stars afforded light enough to enable us to keep the trail, which still became clearer as we advanced. Still, no welcome rancho appeared in sight.

At length, however, those of us who were in the advance, perceived in the obscure distance ahead, what appeared to be the outlines of a rancho.

We were certain it was not a clump of chaparral,—neither was it a cluster of rocks. There were the rough bark-covered timbers of an inclo-

sure. Yes, it was what we so much wished to see.

“A rancho!—a rancho!”—was shouted to those of our friends who were in the rear; and the welcome cry was greeted with a glad “hurrah,” which ought to have aroused the inhabitants of the place.

But, to our great chagrin, not even a dog replied to the unusual sound; and, on following up the path, we found ourselves in the inclosure of a large *corral*,—a picketed circle, built for herding and branding wild cattle.

No sounds of humanity greeted our ears; and, on searching around the *corral*, nothing could be found indicating the neighborhood of Mexicans. A stream, however, was found in the rear of the inclosure; but, so far as we could ascertain in the dark, it was unapproachable to our weary and thirsty animals. It ran at the bottom of a deep cañon, and could only be reached by clambering down the steep side, with the assistance of our *lariats* attached to the bushes on the bank above. By this means we succeeded in filling our canteens, and obtaining enough to furnish each man with a cup of coffee; but our horses could not be supplied. They were, however, somewhat relieved by the dew that had fallen heavily on the wiry grass, on which they were glad to feed after their hard day's travel.

Fires were soon kindled, and our scanty suppers of *tasajo*, hard bread, and coffee, disposed of. The guard was posted around the outside of the *corral*; and, spreading our blankets and saddles,—the latter were our pillows,—we sought the refreshing repose which sleeping in the open air of that delicious climate always brings to the weary traveler.

We presented a picturesque group, as we lay stretched in promiscuous disorder over the ground. The flickering light of our camp-fires, illuminating the *corral*, lighted up the deformed outlines of the rough pickets which formed its walls. Here and there, a dark opening appeared, where some partially-decayed timber had been torn away, to furnish the fires. Through these openings, clusters of thick-leaved nopals stretched their hydra-headed and grotesque contortions, and seemed to peer in upon us with vicious eyes,—waiting only for slumber to steep our senses, when they would spring upon us, and strangle us in their spiky embraces.

We were, doubtless, leagues away from any human habitation; for these *corrals* are frequently met with in the extensive cattle-ranges of Mexico and Texas, at great distances from the homes of the *vaqueros*. The quiet stars gleamed calmly and coldly down upon us, and the night wind brought no sounds of life from the surrounding gloom. True,

we were a somewhat numerous party; but in this wild region, ignorant of our whereabouts, and uncertain what course we should pursue on the morrow; destitute of food, and our horses suffering for the want of water;—all these circumstances crowding upon my mind, as I lay among my sleeping comrades, caused a feeling of solitude and loneliness which was entirely new to me.

At last I was forced to yield to the drowsy god, and lost all unpleasant thoughts, in visions of far different scenes.

I cannot say how long I had slept, when I was aroused by an excited exclamation:

“Oh! vat de tufle ist dat? Some tam animal on mine planket! *Get out!*”

This proceeded from one of the Ohio Rangers, who had spread his blanket at the same fire with myself. He had sprung to a sitting posture, and extended a cocked pistol towards an object, the outlines of which I obtained a momentary glimpse of, as it glided between us and the expiring fire.

I snatched the weapon from the hand of the half-awakened Dutchman; for, had he snapped it at the retreating shadow, he would have done so at the imminent risk of the lives or limbs of his comrades, on the other side of the fire.

“Toctor! vat de tufle^{is} ist it!—a bainter?”

I assured him that it was nothing more than a hungry *coyote*, that, probably, tempted by the scent of our suppers, had ventured into the *corral*.

“A *coyote*! Vat ish a *coyote*?”

“It is a kind of jackal, or small chaparral wolf,” I replied.

“A *wolf*, you say! Dunder und blixen! Vel, den, I guess I schleps no more dis night. I vil go and talk mit de guard.”

So, gathering up his blankets, and wrapping them over his shoulders, he started to the opening of the inclosure, in search of a sentinel, and more facts in relation to the nature of a *coyote*. Had I simply informed him that the animal which had disturbed his slumbers was a *coyote*, without entering into an explanation as to its species, it would have caused him no alarm; but the idea, that a *wolf* was sharing his blanket, was more than even a phlegmatic Dutchman could submit to.

Laughing heartily at the abrupt departure of my sleeping companion, I resumed my horizontal position, and yielded to the drowsy influences of the hour. Those about me were giving voice to a variety of nasal notes, which, though not of the most musical character, seemed to impart a somnolent virtue to the air I inhaled.

I had nearly taken up the thread of my dreams,

where it had been broken off, by the sudden exclamation of the Dutchman, when I heard a soft stealthy tread on the dry crispy grass between me and the pickets. Then something sprang lightly over my head—I felt a hairy tail brush rapidly across my face;—and cautiously turning towards the fire, I perceived a coyote moving timidly between it and myself. Snuffing among the ashes he discovered the remnant of a half consumed bone, the relic of our scanty supper. Seating himself leisurely upon a corner of my blanket, he began to crunch the juiceless morsel. Soon he was joined by another; and still others came, till at length I counted no less than seven of these animals moving around the expiring embers, and searching for the crumbs which, had been scattered about them.

I began to think, like the ranger, that I, also, would go and “talk mit de guard;” but then I remembered I had frequently heard of their visiting our night bivouacs, and that the Texians regarded them as entirely harmless,—aside from their thieving propensities. So, throwing my cap amongst them, and scaring them to another quarter of the *corral*, I turned over, and resumed my dreams.

I was awakened before the break of day by a sentinel, who gave me the pleasant information, that we were not far from a rancho.

“How do you know that?” I asked.

“I have heard the barking of dogs, and the crowing of chickens,” replied he. “There now, hark! don’t you hear that?”

“What?”

“That shrill crowing of chickens!—there ’tis again—once, twice, three times! And there, too, is the barking of dogs!”

I listened with my head to the ground, but not a sound struck upon my ear, which I could construe into those familiar signals of humanity.

I quit my blankets, and climbed to the top of the pickets; yet, notwithstanding the slightest concussion vibrates afar through the elastic atmosphere of these elevated plains, I could hear nothing.

Declaring that I must have lost my hearing, the sentinel left me, and aroused others to listen for the wished-for sounds. Some, like myself, remained deaf to them. At length, however, one or two fancied they did hear something, somewhat resembling those welcome voices.

After a while, the whole camp was on the alert to catch the sounds. Some went out from the *corral*—away from the confused noises of the crowd,—and, laying their ears to the ground, listened breathlessly for them. Several thought they heard

the barking of dogs, but could not detect the crowing of chanticleer;—others again were certain that they could readily distinguish the “*cock-a-dudle-du!*” but not the baying of the dogs;—and others again, asserted most positively, that they heard both the crowing and the baying, till at length almost every man in the party was confident that he heard the most unmistakable evidences of our vicinity to the abodes of men.

Yet at this very time, when at least three-fourths of the party fancied—nay, *would have sworn*—that they really heard the voices of chickens and dogs—not one of those domestic animals was within many leagues of us. The wish was parent to the sound.

I have since experienced the same hallucination when bivouacking on the extensive Mustang desert of southwestern Texas. I have laid awake at night, and, in the

“Sma’ hours ayant the twal,”

actually believed that, on the return of the morning light, I should find a human habitation close at hand;—when long leagues stretched their weary distance between us and the nearest settlement.

This deception of the sense of hearing is not akin to the optical illusion of the *mirage*; which latter is

occasioned by a peculiar condition of the atmosphere, and reflection or refraction of light. But the oral illusion is altogether dependent upon the nervous condition of the subject. In one instance, the optic nerve conveys a correct impression, so far as itself is directly concerned, to the brain. In the other, the brain, being under the influence of a peculiar excitement, receives impressions, which are not transmitted by the auditory apparatus, but, by a sort of volition, are received and registered as true auditory vibrations.

As soon as the light of day returned, we began to reconnoitre our position, and search for a place by which we could approach the water with our horses. They had now passed about twenty hours without drink. We found a point in the cañon, where, by partly sliding on their haunches, and partly scrambling down, they could reach the stream. The ascent on the other side was easy enough; and led to a parterre where the *grama*, or *mesquit grass*, was growing in luxuriant abundance. There we concluded to stake out our animals for an hour, to allow them to lay in a good supply of its succulent and nourishing capsules.

The eye could detect no sign of human habitation within its range;—not even were cattle to be seen upon the whole extent of the plateau. The

morning songs of birds and the chirp of the cicada were the only living sounds that fell upon the ear. A more lonely and isolated valley could not be found. It was a fit place for some world-sick misanthrope, who would seek a quiet habitation among the undisturbed solitudes of nature.

After our horses had filled themselves with the rich pasturage, and we had eaten our last ration of *carne seco*, and washed it down with our tin-cup of coffee each, we saddled up, and awaited the order to resume our pathless march.

Which way should we go? This was now a matter of consultation. Had we been in an open prairie country, it would have been soon decided; our course would have been guided by the compass; but, surrounded as we were by mountains on either hand, it required some knowledge of hunter-craft to know the right direction to search for a trail. A Texas Ranger, however, volunteered to bring us to the San Juan river; where, at some point along its banks, we would be sure of finding a rancho; and the Major gladly accepted his guidance.

Accordingly, we struck over towards the base of the hills, with a view of finding a passage through, or over them, to the next valley beyond. We were fortunate in falling in with the bed of a small stream, flowing through a deep and narrow pass, down

which we followed, till it debouched into the valley. Along this valley we rode for several hours, keeping the willows, which skirted the banks of the stream, still in view.

After traveling some eight or ten leagues, and the day being nearly spent, we at length struck a trail, which, following two or three leagues further, brought us to the bank of a large stream, which was immediately recognized as the San Juan.

Plunging into its rocky bed, and struggling through the rapid current that washed our saddle-skirts, we landed amid a luxuriant growth of live-oaks, acacia, and *ebona*,—a forest, in short, such as is rarely seen in this region.

Here we observed several beautiful varieties of the cacti family, which we had never met with before. Besides the nopal or cochineal plant, the maguey, the Spanish bayonet, and a spheroidal cactus (*melocactus communis*), which, in this prolific soil, grew to a gigantic size, we were struck with the huge proportions of a variety of cactus, which was new to most of us. It sprung from the crevices of the rocks, and upon the edge of the river-bank, to a height of from twelve to twenty-five feet,—a fluted column of an octagonal form, and without a leaf or branch. It tapered in graceful proportions from the ground, as straight and perfect as if fash-

ioned by the hand of art. Along the angles of this green column, the white porcelain-like flowers were arranged, at regular distances, to the top; while, upon the very apex, a cluster of blossoms, larger and more brilliant than the others, formed a fitting coronal for this noblest representative of the most numerous family of plants to be found in tropical forests. This columnar cactus is known as the *Cereus giganteus*.

We now found ourselves riding along a well-beaten road, over which a number of heavily-loaded *carretas* had but recently passed. The road lay along the bank of the stream, down which we followed. We reached an open glade, where there was an abundant supply of the rich grama grass, just as the setting sun was casting the long shadows across the San Juan. Here we found the embers of a recent camp-fire, still glowing among the grass. It was, no doubt, the last resting-place of the *carreteros*, whose tracks we had observed along the road. They had passed the previous night here. This was an evidence that we were still distant from any rancho; and we, therefore, concluded to follow their example. In a few minutes, our horses were stripped, and greedily cropping the luxuriant *grama*.

This night, our last ration of coffee was consumed;

after partaking of which, we spread our blankets for the night. Some of our comrades had fallen asleep,—to revel, perhaps, in dreams of well-spread tables and festal cheer. The Texians, however, had observed several dark objects gliding through the grass, and were on the look-out for a supper. Soon, the report of a carbine proclaimed their success; then another; and several others, at short intervals. I left my blankets, and, going into the edge of the timber, discovered the cause of the firing. Our friends had had the good luck to shoot six or seven *armadillos*. These are nocturnal animals, somewhat common in the country, and are considered, by the natives, as the richest delicacy.

They were brought in, and divided among the hungry men. The fires were replenished, and soon the fragrance of roasted meat pervaded the camp.

But the northern men of our party were not yet hungry enough to eat the meat of these strange animals. Many had not even heard of an *armadillo*,—and their covering of mail and long rat-like tails were by no means tempting to their fastidious appetites. A greater share, therefore, fell to the lot of those who were less squeamish; and some of our number made a most delicious supper;—for, prejudice aside, the *armadillo* furnishes one of the most delicate dishes I ever remember to have eaten. I

have seen them served up in a great variety of ways by Mexicans and South Americans,—and, as they so much surpass any other wild meat, it is difficult to decide which is the most preferable mode of cooking them.

CHAPTER XXII.

Resumption of the March.—Guerrillas in Sight.—The Race.—Mysterious Disappearance of the Guerrillas.—The Race continued.—The Wounded Mexican.—Prisoners.—Chaparral Surgery.—Romero's Men.—Hacienda of San Miguel.—Signs of Guerrillas.—The Mayoral.—The Porkers.—A Bereaved Parent.—Efforts to Alleviate Hunger.—The Search for Forage.—Discovery of a Prize.—The Secret of the Mayoral's Hospitality.—Foundered Horses.—San Cristobal.—Signal Guns.—The Town Deserted.—Dignity and Inhospitability.—The Alcalde.—No Prospect of Food.—The Texian's Remedy.—Its good Results.—Prospects for a Supper Improve.—Women and hot Tortillas.—The Alcalde improves on acquaintance.—Canales' Orders.—Supper comes in good Time.—An Agreeable Ending to an Unpromising Beginning.—Arrival at Cerralvo.

THE morning light found us on our road again, following down the right bank of the San Juan.

We were riding leisurely along,—admiring the varied objects of interest, in the floral and geological developments, which presented themselves along our route. We had almost forgotten the real object of our expedition,—when the party of Rangers, who had been sent in advance, as vedettes, were seen riding back, and motioning us to halt.

They reported that a body of mounted Mexicans

had appeared along the top of the high bank, on the opposite side of the river. It was apparent that they had not discovered our party, as we were screened by the cacti, and other growth, which covered the edge of the river-bank on our side. The Mexicans were also proceeding down the river;—and, as they were moving slowly, we doubted not we could cross the stream in their rear, and approach them before they would suspect our presence.

We, therefore, halted for a moment, that they might get ahead;—then, taking to the current, which, though rapid, was fordable at almost any point, we reached the left bank undiscovered.

Ascending the bank, we found a well-trodden trail, which, like the one we had been traveling on the other side, ran parallel to the river.

We rode along silently, at a gentle trot, for about a mile, when, at a turn in the road, we came in sight of the Mexicans. They were a party of some fifty, well armed and mounted;—but they had observed us at the same instant;—and, putting spurs to their mustangs, flew rapidly along the trail, leaving a cloud of dust behind them.

Our horses were in good condition,—thanks to the *grama* of our last halting-place,—and an exciting chase now commenced.

Should there be no side-trails, leading through the

thick undergrowth, from that we were on, we would soon overtake them, and bring them to a stand. But, along all the bridle-paths, as well as the more traveled wagon-roads, we had encountered these branching trails, leading from the main track. They were, probably, made by cattle wandering from one grassy glade to another.

We were evidently gaining upon the guerrillas, for such they no doubt were.

They were within carbine range; but we were not disposed to waste our shots. We hoped they would take to cover, and give us a chance for a fair fight, as our numbers were about equal.

We had now reached a point where we could see for some distance along the trail. About half a mile in advance, it passed over an abrupt spur of a high range of hills, where, no doubt, the Mexicans intended to make a stand. The ascent was steep; while a tangled growth of chaparral made the hill unapproachable, save along the path.

It was an object with us, to reach the hill as soon as possible, after the enemy, to make the attack before they could have time to form, or seek shelter under cover of the rocks, which covered the crest of the eminence.

Rapidly they scoured along the path,—putting their little animals to their best paces. They had

nearly reached the foot of the hill ; but were lost to sight by a short angle in the road ;—we could distinctly hear the clatter of their horses' hoofs over the loose stones.

Sinking the rowels into our horses' flanks, we pushed them along at a killing rate. We had reached the foot of the hill,—but where were the guerrillas ! We saw them but a moment before ;—but, with the exception of some half dozen, who were flying over the hill, they had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared ! Some pursued on up the steep ascent of the hill, while others drew up to examine the ground at its base.

Here, to our extreme chagrin, we discovered numerous trails, leading out from the dry bed of a summer stream. These trails led off in every direction, and each bore the fresh track of the flying mustangs.

It was now evident that the guerrillas had dispersed, and a further pursuit was worse than useless.

Our object was now to overtake those who had kept on the main path, if possible, and, by taking one of the number prisoner, force him into our service as a guide.

I had checked my horse but an instant, at the spot where we had lost sight of the guerrillas ; but con-

tinued to push on up the hill. The retreating Mexicans in advance of us, had passed out of sight over the crest, followed closely by a number of the Texian Rangers. As I reached the top of the ascent, I heard the *crack! crack!* in rapid succession, of two rifle shots; then, on looking down the path on the descending side, the Mexicans again were seen, still ahead of the pursuing Rangers. I observed, however, that the foremost rider was reeling in his saddle.

As I gained upon them, a dark crimson stain discolored the white *camisa* and buckskin *calzones* of the Mexican, and dabbled down the foaming flanks of his horse.

The panting animal was doing his best;—but, as he reached the bottom of the descent, and was crossing the rocky bed of a brook, he made a misstep, and stumbled,—falling partially upon his knees;—but, quick as thought, he recovered his feet. The sudden and unexpected motion, however, was too much for the wounded man, who, already exhausted from the loss of blood, now lost his hold, and fell to the ground.

Seeing the fate of their comrade, the others drew up where he had fallen, and, throwing down their arms, awaited our approach.

The Rangers secured their prisoners, while I dis-

mounted, and proceeded to examine the condition of the wounded Mexican.

A rifle ball had passed through his right arm, shattering the humerus, and severing the artery. When our party came up, I was engaged in taking up the bleeding vessel. With the leaves of the Spanish bayonet plant which grew at hand, I was supplied with the best of splints; and one of the Mexicans, untying the silken sash about his loins, furnished all I required in the way of a bandage.

In a short time, the wounded man was able to be placed on his saddle; and remounting, we all proceeded on our way. We learned from our prisoners, that they were part of the band of Romero, whom they had started out to join, at the hacienda of San Miguel, about two leagues distant.

It was about noon, when we reached the hacienda, which was a small sugar-cane and maize plantation, under the charge of a *Mayoral*, or agent. The principal house, an *adobe* structure of one story, was occupied by that person. The *jacals* surrounding it were of less pretending appearance and occupied by the *peons*, who performed the labors of the hacienda.

On approaching the entrance of the picketed inclosure which surrounded the houses, we observed the footprints of a large body of horse. These

were doubtlessly made by the guerrillas, who had recently left the place.

In fact, our prisoners asserted that their leader, joined by the party, to whom they had belonged, had left the place within an hour.

The Major would have continued the pursuit without halting, had not the famished condition of the command required a temporary halt.

As we were entering the place, we were met by the worthy *Mayoral*, who received us with a grand flourish of welcome; and, leading the way up to the front of his residence, invited us to alight and make ourselves at home.

“*Soy muy servidor de ustedes, señores! y la hacienda, con todo que la tiene, está muy á sus disposiciones.*”

“What says he, Doctor?” inquired the Major, appealing to me, whose services were usually called upon, when an interpreter was required.

I replied,—anglicizing the Mayoral’s complimentary tender of hospitality,—that the hacienda, and all it contained, was at our service.

“Well! I’ll be shot, old fellow, if you ain’t the most obleeing greaser this chap ever treed!” exclaimed a hungry Texian, taking him at his word; “and to prove you’re no liar,” continued he, “here goes for a roast pig, for my share!”

So, coolly dismounting from his horse, the Texian

drew bead upon one of a litter of plethoric pork-lings, at the further end of the yard, fired, and the little animal fell to the ground without a grunt.

"*Está bueno! bien hecho, amigo mio!*" (That's good, well done, my friend!) quietly observed the imperturbable Mexican, whose eye had followed the motions of the Ranger.

"Yes! pretty fat pig, that's a fact, old fellow!"

"Seeing as how you take it so mighty easy, neighbor," says one of the Buckeye Rangers, "I guess I'll try one of them ere suckers myself!"

"And here goes for another!"

"And another!" cried several voices. And, in less time than it takes to tell it, the maternal parent of the sleek little grunTERS was left in the melancholy condition of the disconsolate Rachel,—who would not be comforted, because her children were not.

In the mean time a dozen fires were kindled about the place; and the men, putting the hospitality of the Mexican to the severest test, had appropriated to their own use, not only roasters, but kids, chickens, and such other delicacies as came to hand.

Soon a variety of delicious flavors emanated from the fires, and filled the atmosphere of the place with their grateful fragrance.

In passing through the houses of the *peons*, a

number of women were found, who were set at work at their *metates*, and in a little while the *pat! pat! pat!* of their busy hands gave promise of a supply of *tortillas*,—a fitting accompaniment to the barbecued and broiled meat of kids and porkers.

In the mean time, while a portion of the men were engaged in preparing the dinners, others were occupied in searching the premises for corn, and other provender for our horses.

A large adobe building, at some distance from the main rancho, attracted their observation.

On reaching it, however, they found the doors firmly secured; but a narrow opening in the wall afforded a view of the interior.

The one room of this store-house, for such it was, was piled from the floor to the thatched roof, with a mingled mass of barrels, boxes, and sacks, which had a foreign appearance, most inappropriate to this out-of-the-way locality.

Soon the doors were made to yield before the blows of the extemporaneous battering-rams, wielded by the Rangers; and on entering the building they found it filled with barrels of flour, sugar, molasses, and vinegar; boxes of sperm candles and soap, sacks of meal, salt, preserved fruits, and oats; detached portions of harnesses, artisans' tools, and

many other matters, enumerated among the ordinary stores of an army.

These articles were immediately recognized as the property of Uncle Sam; in fact, the robbers, so confident of their security in this isolated place, had not even taken the precaution to obliterate the brands of "U. S. A.," with which all our army supplies were marked.

We learned afterwards, that this plunder was part of the cargoes of the train, whose drivers were so inhumanly massacred near Marin, early in the spring previous.

The owner of the hacienda was an officer in the corps commanded by Urrea; and had purchased these stores on a speculation. No doubt, had he been able to retain them, till the American army had withdrawn from the city of Monterey, he would have made a small fortune by the operation.

Here, we discovered the secret of the extreme hospitality, and friendly disposition of our *hacendado*, who had been made the custodian of his employer's treasures. He could afford to submit patiently to the slaughter of his pigs and flocks, so long as they would divert the attention of our men from the valuable dépôt of our own property, under his guardianship.

As may be supposed, we lost no time in securing our host, and putting him under the surveillance of the guard.

Our horses were once more regaled on an abundant feed of oats, which they doubly relished after several days' abstinence from grain. The consequence was, that a good number of them, being overfed, were badly foundered, and unable to proceed, when, two hours after, a portion of the command resumed the march.

Leaving a party of twenty-five men at the hacienda, to guard the stores of the plundered train, the Major now determined to return to Cerralvo by the most expeditious route, and dispatch wagons for their removal.

Therefore, taking the *Mayoral* for a guide, and leaving our other prisoners behind, we again took the road.

That night we encamped at the *pueblecito* of San Cristobal.

As we approached the village, we heard the firing of signal guns ; and, on entering the large plaza, the place seemed to be deserted. Not a man was to be seen. We, however, rode to a large inclosure, a kind of *corral*, on one side of the plaza, and, picketing our horses, began to make arrangements for encamping.

We determined to spend the night here, at all events; and, while our horses were being stripped, the Major and myself were about to start on a reconnoissance of the place.

At this moment, a solitary figure made his appearance, striding across the square, with an extraordinary assumption of dignity. His hands were crossed over his back, and under the long skirts of a Shanghai black coat; a glossy *sombrero* was cocked over his dexter ear, with an air of great importance; and, stepping up to the little group around the Major, he coldly saluted that officer, without so much as condescending to notice the rest of us, and demanded, in no very friendly tone of voice:

“*Que quieres, señores?*” (what do you want, sirs?)

I replied to this rather uncourteous salutation, by informing him that we wished to see the Alcalde.

“*Por que?*” was the cool and laconic rejoinder.

We began to think that he was coming the dignity rather too strong, to suit our appreciation of Mexican character; so, addressing him with an improvement on his own haughty manner, I demanded to be conducted forthwith to the house of the Alcalde, or he would experience the consequence of a non-compliance.

“*Yo mismo soy el Alcalde !*” (I am the Alcalde !)

“The devil you are! I mistook your impertinence for that of a saucy priest,” I replied. “And now, señor, as you are nothing more than the Alcalde of this cut-throat looking place, we want you to furnish us with a beef for our men, and corn for our horses; for which we are willing to pay you a fair compensation.”

“*No hai, señores! no hai carne,—no hai maiz,*” (there is neither meat nor corn) replied the ill-favored scamp, with the usual accompanying wag of the forefinger.

“Hurry, old fellow,—do you hear?—and dispatch some of your men to bring forthwith what we want.”

“*Digo,*” repeated the Mexican, “*no hai carne,—ni maiz,—ni siquiera hombres; todos son afuera—todos,*” (I say there is neither meat nor corn,—not even men. They are all gone,—all)

“Where are your men?”

“*Quien sabe.*”

We were beginning now to lose patience with the obstinate Mexican, when a Texian, with a hair lariat in his hand, stepped up and addressed the Major:

“With your permission, sir, I can bring this greaser to terms; I know the nature of the brute.”

“How will you do it?” asked the officer; “he is as stubborn as the Corkonian’s pig!”

"I'll choke him a little with this lariat, sir," said the Texian, shaking that instrument in the Alcalde's face.

I assured the Major that I had seen the experiment performed several times, and always with the happiest results.

The Ranger was then permitted to adjust the rope; but with instructions not to push the choking process so far that the Mexican would be unable to cry *peccavi*, when he had got enough.

"Never fear, Major," was the answer; "I'll do it up brown; but I'll get the rations, and yet leave breath enough in his carcass to stand another choking, the next time we happen to come this way."

The Texian then politely requested the Alcalde to remove his broad-brimmed *sombrero*; but not complying readily, it was removed for him, by one of the crowd, who had assembled to witness this novel proceeding.

The rope, previously prepared with a hangman's loop, was placed over his head, and drawn down to the throat. Gathering up about two-thirds of the free end of the rope in his hands, our Ranger led his victim towards the gate of the *corral*, over the posts of which was stretched a cross-piece of timber as a brace. Throwing the end of the rope over this, it was caught by a number of hands, and drawn

gently downwards, when they waited for the word to stretch upon it.

Up to this moment, the Mexican looked upon the whole proceedings as a joke only ; but as the word was given—“ *heave away, boys !*”—the obstinacy and dignity of the worthy alcalde suddenly deserted him ; and, clutching the rope with both hands, he exclaimed :

“ *Oh ! señores ! por el amor de Dios ! misericordia ! Sí ! tengo carne ! hai bastante,—bastante !*” (Oh ! for the love of God ! mercy ! yes ! I have meat ; a plenty,—plenty !)

“ Say *corn, too*, you black devil, or up you go !” cried his merciless executioner.

“ *Sí ! y maíz tambien, bastante !*”

“ Let him down, boys—let him down ! he relents—we’ve cured him ! Now, mister Alcalde, are you sure we can have the corn and meat ?” asked the Texian.

The Mexican, addressed thus in good English, was at a loss, for a moment, what answer to make ; but at length comprehending at a venture, hastened to reply.

“ *Sí ! señores ! sí, con mucho gusto !*”

“ But when ? *quando ?*”

“ *Aprisa ! aprisa ! inmediatamente, señores !*” (quickly ! quickly ! immediately, gentlemen !)

By this time the plaza began to assume an appearance of life; and women were gathering from all parts of the town, to intercede for their magistrate. I assured them that we intended no harm to him, but were only forcing him to sell some supper to a party of hungry men. We only wanted meat and corn, for ourselves and horses; and the privilege of passing the night in their place; and in the morning we should leave them unharmed.

The women were satisfied; and they declared that those articles could be had; and we should have them, too.

The Texian, who had proposed the *trial by lariat*, now whispered in my ear:

“Doctor! negotiate with the women, for a bushel or two of hot *tortillas*.”

“Well suggested!” I replied, and turning to the Alcalde, I asked that worthy, loud enough to be heard by the crowd of women, if he could include, in his contract, a couple of hundred or so of those articles.

“*¡Sí! sí! sí!*” exclaimed, at once, a score of musical voices; and the women scattered in every direction, to their houses, to commence the labors of the *metate*; and soon the clapping of hands announced that the interesting process of preparing them had begun.

The Alcalde, now become the most accommodating and complaisant of hosts, invited the Major, and a number of others, to accompany him to his house, which was close at hand. Arriving at his porch, he took a large cow's horn, which hung suspended from the thatch, and with a few blasts, summoning from their hiding-places a number of stout rancheros, dispatched them forthwith, to bring into the plaza the requisite supplies.

One by one the family of the Alcalde entered the house, to have a nearer view of the *Americanos*. To them, we were "*rara avis*," a strange sight, which they had never before had an opportunity to see. We were the veritable barbarians, of whom they had heard so much.

The Alcalde now called to his wife,—a pleasant, good-natured looking little body,—and requested her to bring a bottle of Parras brandy and some glasses. When the señora returned with the liquor, he poured out a glass, first to himself;—and, passing the bottle to his guests, proposed our healths,—“hoping that the next time he should have the pleasure of our company, it might be under more pleasant circumstances!”

“But the fact is, gentlemen,” said he, “I received you, according to special instructions from *El Gobernador*, General Canales. I dared not do otherwise ;

—and, as you have forced me to your own terms,”—continued he, smilingly, and making a significant motion towards his throat,—“I hope to escape unharmed.”

While this was taking place, the *rancheros* had returned with a fine beef, which they proceeded to dress in the plaza; and, by the time the men had started their cooking, the *tortillas*, piping hot from the pans, were being brought from the different houses, neatly enveloped in snow-white napkins.

Notwithstanding the unpromising appearance of matters on arriving at the village, we succeeded in getting a good supper,—as well as the means for an ample breakfast;—and, on leaving the Alcalde in the morning, the Major gave him an order on the Quartermaster, at Monterey, for the full amount of all we had obtained of him; besides, adding to the amount, a small bonus, by way of compensation, for the unceremonious liberties we had taken with his person.

The worthy magistrate had become very friendly, and, on bidding him farewell, he insisted on mounting his horse and accompanying us a short way, and putting us in the road towards Cerralvo,—which place we reached, as the shades of night were stealing over it, after an absence of five days. Although,

so far as the real object of the expedition was concerned, we had not accomplished much, yet the discovery of the plundered stores, at that particular time, was of much importance to the army, which was in want of them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Negotiations for Peace.—The Relieving of the old Troops.—The Withdrawal of the Regular Troops of the Mexican Army.—The Mexican Government forced to a Treaty.—The Writer takes Passage for Home.—Arrival at Reynosa.—A Surprise.—Meets an old Friend.—Her Impressions.—She visits General Taylor.—A Free Pass.—Return to St. Louis.

It was now late in the winter of 1847-8, and negotiations had been some months in progress for the ratification of a treaty of peace between the two belligerent governments; and in view of the accomplishment of this object, the veteran troops were being relieved by those of more recent levies.

There remained but little to occupy the army, save keeping open the communication between the coast and the interior.

The Mexicans had withdrawn all their regular forces;—and the guerrillas only remained to molest us.

They, however, were nothing more now than organized bands of robbers, waylaying the thoroughfares, to pick up a scanty plunder from such little parties as ventured forth unguarded. Our trains,

therefore, still required the protection of small escorts, while employed in the transportation of supplies to the garrisoned towns; and gradually removing such materiel of war, as could be readily dispensed with, towards the Gulf coast.

A war, of almost three years' continuance, which had been maintained, on our part, at the expense of millions of treasure, and the blood of thousands of the best men of our nation;—but which had established for us a military reputation, of which our country is justly proud, was coming to a close.

The Mexican people were weary of a struggle attended only with defeat;—their soldiery were discouraged,—having been taught by bitter experience the utter inexpediency of longer contending, in the open field, with their invincible Anglo-Saxon antagonists. Their national treasury was exhausted; dissensions and revolutionary factions were fermenting at the capital; and the entire political horizon of the country was dark with portentous clouds.

A treaty of peace, therefore, must soon be ratified; however disadvantageous it might prove to the political and moral interest of the Mexican nation.

I had taken passage at Camargo, on board a small steamer bound for the little river town of Reynosa.

The river, at this season, was at a low stage, so that boats of any considerable draught could not proceed beyond that point. Here, the supplies intended for the upper country were reshipped; and passengers bound down were landed, to await the arrival of the lower river boat.

When we arrived at Reynosa, the steamer from below had not yet come up, and the passengers sought quarters for the night in the town.

The next morning, arrived the "Rough and Ready," which would turn her bows down-stream again so soon as she had discharged her freight upon the river-bank.

Soon as we heard the sound of her 'scape-pipes, we hastened to the landing, to welcome her arrival. At length, she came in sight round the bend of the river, and steamed cautiously up the shallow channel of the long reach that lay below the town.

We observed on her hurricane deck what, to us, were objects of no small interest,—so long had our eyes been unaccustomed to the sight. It was no less than a group of ladies, dressed in the latest styles of the States.

With but one exception, I believe,—and that was the lady of Major H., of the pay department,—no American lady had visited our line, during

our occupation of the country ; and that was truly like an “ angel’s visit.”

Who could these ladies be ? Perhaps they were the loving wives of some of our officers ; and had come to the country to join their long-absent lords, who, no doubt, were soon to return home with them. They certainly had the appearance of American ladies ;—at all events, whoever they were, they were evidently just from the United States ; for they wore *bonnets*, and their dresses, so unlike those worn by the Mexican ladies, indicated as much.

As the boat turned up to the landing, one of the ladies had recognized an acquaintance on the bank ; and, advancing in front of the group, was gesticulating in an earnest manner towards him.

No one, of our little party of downward-bound passengers, seemed to receive these marks of recognition as directed to himself. At last, as the boat touched the bank, and a deck-hand sprang to the shore, line in hand, I was surprised to hear the voice of the lady, exclaiming :

“ *Señor Medico ! Don Esteban !! Doctor !!! venga a bordo !*”

I looked,—certainly the words were addressed to me !—I could not be mistaken ; for I was standing

apart from the other persons on the bank, and the eyes of the lady were directed particularly to me! But what lady would have chanced to recognize me, in that part of the world!

She was evidently a Mexicana, or a Spaniard. Ah! I have it now,—she is probably some one of my creole friends, whom I had parted with some years before in Cuba. At all events, the mystery can be easily solved;—so, stepping across the gangway plank, and springing up the stairs to the upper deck, I found myself enfolded in a pair of fleshy arms, and drawn into a friendly, but most smothering embrace.

“Ah! amigo mio, tengo muchisimo alegria á la vista de usted!”

And it was not till I had released myself from this genuine Mexican salutation, that I found myself in the presence of my kind friend of Monterey, Doña Felicite Mendez.

After mutual compliments, Doña Felicite informed me, that she was now on her return from the United States. She had been to St. Louis, where she had left her two sons, and a daughter, to be educated. She said, she had stopped at Baton Rouge, where she had spent a week very agreeably in the family of her friend, General Taylor.

It was her first visit to the United States. She

had seen much to interest her ; and had much to communicate to me of her impressions.

“ Why, *amigo mio !*” said she to me, with a quizzical smile,—“ I have discovered that your countrymen are not at all like the Camanches ; they are quite as refined as the *Mejicanos !*”

I spent an hour very agreeably with my good friend, who easily exacted a promise from me, to call upon her *Pepe*, *Martin*, and *Carlota*, on my arrival at St. Louis.

“ My dear sir ! as you know that lady, will you relieve my curiosity, by informing me who she is ?”

This request was smilingly made by the captain of the boat. I gave him a satisfactory answer, and formally introduced him to the lady.

“ Well, really !” observed the captain, as I was about to leave the boat,—“ I thought that your friend was no less a personage, than the lady of Santa Anna herself. My cargo consists almost entirely of trunks, boxes, and rich furniture, belonging to her, and her retinue of Spanish ladies from New Orleans.”

“ She brings an order from General Taylor, for the free transportation of herself, friends, and goods to Monterey.”

It was many months before I had the pleasure of

fulfilling the promise I had made to Doña Felicite. But when, at length, I arrived at St. Louis, her sons were almost the first persons who welcomed my return.

It is now quite common for the wealthy families of Mexico, to send their sons and daughters to this city, to obtain educations; and many of them form attachments to the country and people of the "northern barbarians," which they will ever after retain.

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